

Exploring the Fourth River

**A Spiritual Memoir of
Adventures in Christian Science
2.0**

By Jim Chapman

Discussion DRAFT

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He advances most in divine Science who meditates most on infinite spiritual substance and intelligence.

Mary Baker Eddy

Handling animal magnetism is the highway to heaven.

Edward A. Kimball

It is worth reiterating that unfolding infinity is the whole of being.

Mary Sands Lee

I realized that I couldn't die my way into heaven – I had to think my way in, live my way in, and love my way in.

Edward E. Norwood

Notes on Quotations from Previous Page

“He advances most in divine Science who meditates most on infinite spiritual substance and intelligence.”

From “Miscellaneous Writings” by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 309:12.

“Handling animal magnetism is the highway to heaven.”

Passed down orally from Edward A. Kimball’s teaching. He taught the teachers for MBE at the beginning of the 20th Century.

“It is worth reiterating that unfolding infinity is the whole of being.”

From the article entitled, “Being is Unfoldment” by Mary Sands Lee, appearing in the Christian Science Journal, January 1941,

I realized that I couldn’t die my way into heaven – I had to think my way in, live my way in, and love my way in.

This may be a paraphrasing from my memory of more than four-decades ago, from reading a reminiscence by Edward E. Norwood, at the Longyear Historical Society. In checking this reference, I was recently provided, from that source, page 34: “... we don't die out ... but we must live out, think out, love out ...”

Exploring the Fourth River

Preface

This book provides selected anecdotes and commentary from my upbringing and experiences in Christian Science (CS). A main focus is on a few years through 1977 and how those affected my spiritual perspective. These experiences led to a significant transition in spiritual viewpoint, which I consider to be related to what Mary Baker Eddy (MBE), the discovery and leader of CS, refers to in her definition of the river Euphrates, the Biblical fourth river running out of Eden.¹

This spiritual memoir is based on at least two levels of thinking, beyond the every-day – two spiritually mental paradigms – beginning with the purely spiritual and then tip-toeing into the spiritual realm of the infinite. It is organized in three parts: Part One describes the early trajectory of a student of CS; Part Two brackets several years of transition; and Part Three relates experiences where the “fourth river” perspective is occasionally used in spiritual practice and demonstration, continuing through 2021. There is an Epilogue that attempts a grand summary. From all this, I hope you will find some ideas that may be helpful and welcome in your spiritual toolkit as well as encouraging you in your spiritual journey.

I started writing about these anecdotes in 2018, in some cases informed by notes, previous writings, and old emails. They are little stories and snippets that had significant meaning or intensity from among my recollections or are considered useful for

¹ *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H)*, by Mary Baker Eddy (MBE), p. 585:16. This definition includes, “... a state of mortal thought, the only error of which is limitation,” among others.

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someone on the spiritual path. For the most part, the individual narratives are presented in chronological order. I've tried especially to get the sequence right in what I am calling the transition time, during 1976 and 1977.

Regarding grammatical style, I make no claims to consistency in the specialized capitalization² of CS or use of initials versus spelling out names. I have used whatever made sense for each occurrence. Sometimes it seems too glib to use initials, and at times scrupulously correct capitalization obscures the meanings of words, in cases such as Truth and truth or He and he. I have sometimes used "infinity" as a name for God without capitalization, to give emphasis to the meaning of the word rather than the name. Where it could be done unobtrusively, references are included in the text. I've sometimes used footnotes where an embedded reference might disturb the flow.

Other than describing specific experiences, I've tried to avoid too much exposition, to keep things concise, and to follow more closely the writers' precept, "show, don't tell."



In relating these stories, some of which are clearly beyond the everyday, my intention is not to cast them as "phenomenal exhibition(s),"³ to use MBE's term, but to lay out experiential observations for consideration. The saying, "the plural of

² "Capitalization," *The First Church of Christ Science and Miscellany*, (MY), by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 225:6-26.

³ S&H, p. 150:6

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anecdotes is not data” must be balanced against the truism that, “Impossibilities never occur.”⁴

What might be scientific observations in the spiritual realm are different from those in the physical sciences. With spiritual experiences, one is rarely able to accumulate statistical data, at least not in the micro sense. However, there are data in the form of recollections of experiences, observations, and insights. Often one has a reasonably objective idea of the initial conditions, what one did, what they thought, the decisions they made – experiences of the mind and heart – and occasionally things that happened objectively on the body or other life circumstances.

Over the years I’ve found that some spiritual experiences can be mined to yield useful insights and to inform the on-going development of one’s spiritual understanding and perspective. When we get a number of spiritual experiences under our belt, we can, every so often, see repeating patterns, and glean from them insights to evolve our theory and practice.

My main reason for writing here is to relate the special utility of the *infinite spiritual* point of view and perhaps to hint at its superpower; also to provide some context to make that idea more accessible; to document evidence from a lifetime to support credibility; to pass along some useful lessons learned; and to give glory to God.

⁴ *S&H*, p. 245:27

Part One – Preparation

Seeking and finding (1949)

My paternal grandparents spent their work-lives as Presbyterian missionaries in the Philippine Islands, and my mom was raised as Roman Catholic in Massachusetts. My parents met at work, in Boston, and when they were planning to wed, they talked to a Catholic priest about officiating. His condition was that they raise any children in that church, so they began attending a Congregational church in the Boston area, where they were wed.

I suppose my spiritual history begins three and a half years later when I was about six months old, and my sister was about two. My mom's neighborhood friend, Marie Bogart, gave her a copy of a short book entitled, *Rudimental Divine Science*, by Mary Baker Eddy (MBE). My mom, who had been spiritually searching, seeking a religion for her young children and struggling with her own serious emotional problems, called my dad at his office and said, "Jim, I've found it!"

Lucky (1951)

I found this typed on a scrap of paper in my mom's files:

One afternoon, before Jimmy was three, we were out front raking leaves, when 'Lucky' a neighbor dog who had been hit by an automobile a month or so before limped by on three legs. That night when Daddy had finished saying the blessing, Jimmy looked up and said, 'Do you know what I was praying for? Lucky – cause he was holding his leg up.' The next day we saw Lucky and he was walking perfectly on all four legs, and continued to do so. Jimmy seemed very much impressed at the time and almost a year later says with great feeling, 'Love healed Lucky.'

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Lost dog found (1952)

One of my earliest recollections is vague, but I believe I found a lost dog and brought it home. We moved from that house when I was three and a half, so I was no older than that. My parents must have contacted the owners, from whom I received considerable gratitude and the reward of a little harmonica. My memory is of sitting out on the front steps holding that little harmonica and feeling a deep satisfaction from having done something good.

Poison ivy (mid-1950s)

My earliest recollection of a spiritual experience, where I was significantly involved in the praying, is from when I was around seven or eight years old. Family members have told me of earlier experiences, but this was the first one where my own praying and the resulting spiritual realization are what I remember most clearly.

As I mentioned, my parents came into Christian Science when I was about six months old, so I attended the CS Sunday School from an early age. We learned about the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes, and Bible stories, as well as the Lord's Prayer, along with MBE's spiritual interpretation of it.

In Sunday School, I learned that God is Love, and that God's protecting love is always available to us, wherever we are. My Sunday School teacher used to say that anything bad or hurtful is error, and "Error is no more real than the hole in a doughnut."

One morning when I was walking to school with friends, we stopped to lean over a low fence and checkout the brook that ran

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under the street. Occasionally we'd throw rocks in the brook, and once, I'd seen a muskrat, which was pretty exciting. As we're leaning over this fence looking into the brook, my friend shouts, "Hey, watch out, there's poison ivy all over!" I looked down to see a patch of ripe, shiny, poison ivy leaves wrapped all over the fence. But I wasn't afraid and said, "Poison ivy can't hurt me." My friends said I was crazy, so just to show them I didn't even believe in poison ivy, I grabbed two fistfuls of the dark shiny leaves and rubbed them vigorously all over my face, as if scrubbing my face with a wash cloth. I guess my friends were really impressed. Anyway, it was getting late, so we ran along to school. And I didn't give it another thought.

At noon I went home for lunch, and when I walked into the kitchen, my mom took one look at me and said, "Jimmy, what did you do to your face? It's all red!" I told her the story, and she was not happy. She spoke to me about the Bible story where Jesus is tempted by the devil, and the devil dares him to cast himself down from the temple. The devil says, go ahead, God will take care of you. And Jesus replies, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."⁵ My mom explained that when we look for error to show God's power over it, it is as if we have made it real.

I guess, for me, the point of the story was that we can turn to God for help and healing, but that prayer isn't for doing tricks or trying to impress our friends. Well, my mom was really mad, and she said, "Go to your room, and know the truth!"

⁵ Matthew 4:7.

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“Know the truth” is a phrase CS uses to describe one way to pray, from the Bible verse, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”⁶

Upstairs in my room, I sat down on my bed and took out my Bible and CS textbook (*S&H*) and went right to the Lord’s Prayer with Mary Baker Eddy’s spiritual interpretation, which we had been studying in Sunday School. About half way through, where she gives an interpretation of the “forgive us our debts” part, she uses the words, “And Love is reflected in love.”⁷ That caught my attention, because, in Sunday School, we had learned that we are the spiritual reflections of God.

I focused on this passage, that “Love is reflected in love.” I reasoned that God is Love, with the big “L,” and I am his reflection, love with a little “l”. As God’s reflection, I was not material, not a goofy kid trying to show-off, but the spiritual reflection of Love, of the divine Love that is God. There was only divine Love, and me as its image and likeness. There wasn’t some foolish kid – just divine Love. It was so pure and simple, and it just sunk in.

Then I felt the presence of that divine Love all around me – a gentle sense of Love’s warmth and as if a soft light filling my room. I forgot about the poison ivy or being in trouble with my mom. I was just sitting on my bed, basking in the palpable presence of that sense of God’s love.

⁶ John 8:32.

⁷ *S&H*, p. 17:7. MBE calls it her “spiritual sense of the Lord’s Prayer,” although it has been commonly called the spiritual interpretation

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My mom called to say lunch was ready, and when I got down to the kitchen, she looked at me and said, “Jimmy, what did you do?” My face was completely clear. There was no trace of the poison ivy. It was gone, and it stayed gone.

As you might imagine, I’ve thought about this a lot over the years, and I have a few observations:

- The experience was so dramatic that it was more than a few decades before I started to reflect seriously on the lessons learned. My first take-away was that our spiritual reflection of divine Love is really showing forth our true spiritual selfhood.
- One thing that occurred to me fairly recently is that I never actually saw it. I never looked at my face, so I wasn’t trying to be healed of physical symptoms, rather I was praying for forgiveness, or perhaps you could say for atonement.
- I imagine the outcome might have been quite different, had I looked in the mirror and then tried to pray to make the rash go away. I don’t even like to think about that. It is a basic idea in CS, that looking at a problem usually makes it harder to solve. It is usually much more helpful to be looking toward the spiritual solution.
- I’m still thinking about how this idea may relate to that principle of quantum mechanics that the state of a system is indeterminant until it is observed. I have a feeling there may be some connection.
- It’s interesting that the MBE sentence that led to my healing was about forgiveness. For the longest time, the phrase, “And Love is reflected in love,” has meant to me exactly what I thought it meant when I was eight years old. It was decades before I really thought about how else it might relate to

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forgiveness. Perhaps it just lifts us up, and there is nothing left to forgive – just divine Love and its reflection – embracing all parties involved.

- As with most healings I've had, my prayer and the ultimate solution, realization, and healing had nothing at all to do with what one might have diagnosed as the problem. In this case, the solution had nothing to do with poison ivy, or inflammation, rashes, or anything else associated with a material or physical assessment of the problem.
- As for the question about how erasing the problem from the tablet of my mentality, also erased it from the skin of my face, well that is a question for another day.

An early Sunday School teacher (1957)

I'm mentioning my grade-school Sunday School teacher here because one of her metaphors is very useful, or will be later, and she surely played a role in preparing me with whatever spiritual tools I had to deal with the poison ivy issue. She was a CS practitioner, and, as I already mentioned, one of her favorite illustrations for us, in explaining the CS position that error (a.k.a., evil) is fundamentally unreal, was that, "Error is no more real than the hole in a doughnut."

At the time, I understood she was trying to illustrate that error is unreal, but I also had a sense that the hole was still a hole. It was not just nothing, it was an absence. Without any deep thought about it, of course, I had an intuitive sense that saying the hole was "unreal" was not a complete solution. On the one hand, there was no substantive problem, but one was nevertheless left with a hole, which was in its own way real. Something was missing.

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As time went on, attending her class, I composed a fictitious story (which is a nice way of saying I lied), perhaps just to be clever or make an impression. I told her I'd become afraid of doughnut holes and would hide under the kitchen table at home when doughnuts were served. Of course, that was a childish fabrication, but it foreshadowed a later theme, that spiritual empty space can be a problem worth solving, and dealing with spiritual empty space is important.

Wasps' nest (1957)

I can picture this next experience in my mind's eye, but don't have any specific recollections about the praying. One Saturday in the summer I stepped on a big rock in the backyard while picking tomatoes for our lunch. The rock teetered and disturbed a hidden wasps' nest. They swarmed up and stung me about 18 times as I ran across the yard to escape. I remember being in my room, lying on my bed praying, and I know others in my family were praying, too. Within an hour or so I was recovered, and we went to the seashore, where I swam in the ocean, free of any aftereffects.

Sailboat race at camp (Early 1960s)

As a 12-year-old attending a CS summer camp in Maine, I was honored to be asked by a 16-year-old to crew in a sailboat race among the senior campers at an end-of-summer regatta. Strong winds and white caps on the lake delayed our rugged little catboats from leaving the dock until early evening. By that time, my skipper had to leave for an awards dinner, and I learned the other boy didn't know how to sail. With me at the tiller and one of my contemporaries hastily chosen for a third, we launched our

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craft onto the turbulent waters under a foreboding sky and hoped for survival.

Knowing I'd need all the help I could get, I assigned clear responsibilities to my crew of two. I asked my compatriot, John, to move his weight, however he could, across the center seat, to keep us heeling slightly to leeward, come what may.

Remembering a loved Bible story where a group was appointed to go before the army and sing praises to God and the beauty of holiness, and, knowing he had some competence in that area, I assigned our senior member, the non-sailor, the job of praying for us all. I wish now I'd asked Rick just how he'd been praying during the harrowing ordeal that followed, but afterward I was too caught up in excitement realizing we actually won the race.

Sunday school with George Nay (Early 1960s)

Occasionally my family would attend the CS Mother Church in Boston on Sundays instead of our local church. While that was considered a special occasion, my sister and I would be enrolled in classes with students and teachers that were unfamiliar to us. On one such occasion, my teacher was George Nay, and I may have been the only one in the class. As part of our discussion, probably guided by my own interests and questions, Mr. Nay related an anecdote from when he was ushering at the front door at a CS church in NYC.

It was a Wednesday service, probably in the early 1950s and in attendance was Albert Einstein. As he was leaving the service, Mr. Nay greeted him. It made an impression on me because George Nay, who I believe spoke German, related that he greeted him by saying, "Good evening, Professor Einstein," but he

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pronounced it “Einshtein,” which pronunciation I’d not heard before or since. As best as I can recall, Mr. Nay related to me that Einstein said, “I wonder if they know what they have here.” That always made me wonder what Einstein thought they had there.

If you search the Internet for “Einstein and Christian Science,” the content of which may have been based on an archival letter Mr. Nay wrote around that time, the wording seems slightly different from my recollection. In any case, Mr. Nay went on to say that he asked Einstein, “Why don’t you join us?” Einstein smiled and patted his breast pocket, where he kept his pipe, in reference to the idea that he would have to give up his smoking habit if he were to become a Christian Scientist. I can’t say for sure that I remember that part, since I’ve also read that on the Internet. But I clearly remember the first quote, as I’ve wondered about it off and on ever since – what did Einstein think it was?

That is all I remember from that class, but afterward my mom seemed impressed that I had George Nay for a teacher, telling me he was a very prominent CS practitioner and lecturer. I do remember that he wore a heavy wool, double-breasted suit, that must have been very stylish a few decades prior, and he was not tall, but had a very earnest manner and a somewhat gravelly sounding voice, and perhaps a bit of an accent. (I found on the Internet transcripts of four CS lectures he gave between 1954 and 1957, and he was listed in the CS Journal as a practitioner well into the 1960s.)

Honesty (1965)

When I was a junior in high school, I came home after a wayward night of hanging out and drinking with my friends. My mom, who

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had unfortunately become very interested in sewing a top button on the shirt I was wearing, smelled liquor on my breath and exclaimed, “Jimmy, you’ve been drinking!” My parents didn’t drink for religious reasons and had expressly forbidden me from drinking. After breathing on her, as she had requested, she repeated herself. I said, “No I haven’t,” against all odds. She went and told my dad, who came to my room. Again, I said, “No I haven’t,” and he left me to myself.

The next day, he and I were riding in the car, and he said, “Last night you told me you hadn’t been drinking, and your word is good enough for me.”

Then after a long moment’s pause, he added, “But, you know, your mother’s not stupid.”

Perhaps he had made a decision to respect my word, even though I didn’t deserve it, and he knew I didn’t deserve it. So it was just grace. It made me want to live up to his standard. He may have made a commitment to love me as he knew I could be, even though I had not yet met that me. Or perhaps he just wasn’t ready to deal with a lying son. At any rate, it made me want to value my word as much as he did.

Sunday school (1966)

This isn’t an experience with external, observable effects, but it is foundational, and it came about ten years after the healing of poison ivy and three years before the healing of my foot, which we will get to in a few pages. I would be remiss if I didn’t include it, although I’m aware that it is fairly abstract and radical.

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In the spring of 1966, my senior year in high school, I showed up for my usual class in the Christian Science Sunday School in my hometown. Our teacher was Joseph G. Heard, and our class usually had three to five or more students. (I mention his full name, because you can find two of his CS lectures from the 1970s on the Web.) On this particular Sunday I was the only one who showed up, so it was just me and Joe.

He'd been a naval officer in the Pacific during WW-II and a Navy chaplain in the Korean War; he had a law degree and was a member of the Florida Bar; and now he was a CS practitioner and worked at the CS Headquarters in Boston. I'd known him for some years, and we had a friendly and comfortable rapport. As we got into our class session, I asked him something I'd been wondering about, how puzzling it is to imagine the extent of the universe, since it is hard to imagine that it is infinite and hard to imagine that it isn't.

Joe pointed out that the real universe isn't "out there" but is within consciousness. It is in the mind of God, the divine Mind, "in whom we live and move and have our being." (Rom 11:36) If we think of the universe as being spiritual, dwelling in divine consciousness, it is easy to think of it as being infinite – it can go on forever like the range of our thinking.

I don't quite remember how we got to the next point, but we considered the nature of what might be substance in that spiritual universe. Joe talked about how the substance of reality isn't material stuff but is spiritual, and that spiritual stuff, at its essence, is the divine energy of God's love. We talked about that for a while, and I still remember the words of my realization – *the energy of spiritual love is the essential substance of existence.*

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For some reason I perceived and sensed the actuality of those words. It was like seeing a little cloud in my mind's eye that represented the energy of spiritual love, and perceiving it to be the actual and true substance of reality.

Then we talked about how, since the true substance of the universe is spiritual, real substance isn't material, it is not matter. Joe mentioned that a prominent physicist had recently described sub-atomic matter as "nothing, moving swiftly," which appealed to me since I'd been studying physics in high school. That led us to the familiar conclusion in Christian Science, that if Spirit is real, then matter, its opposite, must be unreal.

I asked the obvious next question. If matter is unreal, and looking around us as we sat at the class table, where did this unreality come from? The answer he offered was simple. The way it hit me was, if matter is not substance, if it is unreal, then there is no matter; it makes no sense to ask where it comes from – it doesn't come from anywhere. There isn't any.

It seemed like his answer pulled the rug right out from under the question – where does this unreal picture come from? Perhaps it lifted our discussion to a transcendent vision, an entirely spiritual level. Against the perceptions of the physical senses, I was aware that it would seem ridiculous. On the other hand, it followed as a logical consequence of the earlier insights, which had resonated truly to my spiritual sense. This conclusion was at once completely spiritually logical and yet, to thinking based on the material senses, it was absurd. I loved it.

Looking back on this, I have often attributed my comprehension of that concept not only to grasping the substantiality of the

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divine energy of spiritual love, but also to having an appreciation, perhaps even a delight, for an idea that in a funny way made no sense at all. I liked the nonsense aspect of it as well as the logical part.

It was probably because I had so clearly seen the energy of spiritual love as the essential substance of existence, of all reality, that I had the standpoint from which to comfortably accept the idea that it is absolutely true, from a spiritual standpoint, to say there is no matter, even though it might not look that way when viewing our world superficially.

I should probably add that this doesn't deny the good we see around us, it just recognizes it as having its substance in spiritual ideas rather than in external, mindless stuff, separate from consciousness. To paraphrase a Bible verse, the things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man.⁸ This would certainly be a good example.

The acceptance of those few conclusions became the foundation for developing my spiritual thinking and for my continuing spiritual progress. After a few decades, I came to realize that the three main ideas Joe explained that day – spiritual reality dwelling entirely in divine consciousness (accessible to us through reflection); the energy of spiritual love as the essential substance of all true existence; and the utter invalidity of matter as a factor in Truth – those basic ideas represented essential building blocks of spiritual thinking in Christian Science.

⁸ I Cor 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

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After more than a half century, I can still picture myself walking home from that Sunday School class very aware that no matter what things ever looked like, the spiritual world was, in a deep and profound sense, the only one that really mattered.

Why do you need the trappings? (1968)

At some point during my first year or two of college, I decided I wanted to be a Navy chaplain. From my childhood reading, I always assumed that when a young man grew up, he went off to sea. I was in Navy ROTC at that point, and with the military draft in my future, I figured the chaplaincy would be the best way to honor my spiritual aspirations and my inevitable future in the service. Anyway, there was a CS chaplaincy program I could apply to and steps to take.

In the meantime, I applied to serve as a dorm counselor for my junior year in college, and had an interview with an Assistant Dean, who had not long before returned from military service. I told him of my interest, and he talked with me a bit about the chaplaincy as he had seen it. At some point in the conversation, he asked about my motivation. I told him I was interested in having a career infused with spirituality, and I thought that would be a good way to do it. He countered by saying, "Why would you need the trappings, why would you need an insignia on your uniform, why not just live a life infused with spirituality?" I gently rebuffed his suggestion, repeating my reasons, but after the interview, as I was walking down the hill thinking about what he'd said, it occurred to me that, in my case, he was right. That was the end of my thoughts of going into the chaplaincy.

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Spiritual vision and healing (1969)

In the summer of 1969, after my junior year in college, I was doing six weeks of NROTC midshipman training aboard a destroyer, USS Charles S. Sperry, DD-697, homeported in Newport, Rhode Island. After standing many four-hour quarterdeck watches in port, in ill-fitting white dress shoes, one of my feet became infected and swollen. I was fortunate to be able to take weekend liberty and travel to my parents' summer house in Rockport, MA, some hours away by bus.

I remember sitting at the desk in their living room that Saturday morning preparing to pray for my foot, which by then looked like it had swallowed a bloated pink softball.

What little I knew about CS treatment was that the first step is to handle fear.”⁹ (“Handle” is a common CS term for dealing with a problem by realizing spiritual truths that dispel its mental aspect from thought.) Accordingly, I searched my mind and wrote down on a note pad all the things I might be afraid of. Then I proceeded to pray systematically about each item: I wouldn't be able to fulfill my shipboard duties; I didn't know how to give a CS treatment; I wasn't capable of it; it wouldn't work; I would get blood poisoning and lose my foot, or worse; etc.

Then I reached out to what I knew of God for the spiritual truth about each of these fears and used prayers of spiritual reasoning to see my way clear of each, specifically affirming the truth about God and man, and denying the error in each case. At some point, perhaps after an hour or so, I felt comforted and confident that

⁹ *S&H*, p. 411:27, “Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients.”

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my prayers were complete and effective – that I had handled all my fears.

At that point, expecting healing, I looked to see if my foot was better and was disappointed and a little perplexed to see no change at all.

As that day continued and into the next, I periodically revisited my prayers and wondered how, what was then to me an obvious truth, my spiritual perfection as a reflection of God, was to be manifested in the physical healing of my foot. On Sunday I hobbled with my parents to the local CS church service and then hobbled back home again. While waiting for my mom to prepare lunch, I went out on the patio under a sunny blue sky and read a CS Sentinel, a weekly periodical that includes testimonies of healings.

This issue included a testimony from a woman who had a disfiguring growth on her face. The woman had been praying with a CS practitioner, and during one call, the practitioner asked if she was healed, and the patient said, no. The practitioner asked, “How do you know?” The patient said, “I looked in the mirror.” The practitioner said, “That’s not how you tell when you’re healed. You look to spiritual sense to see yourself as God’s reflection.” That really hit me. I realized I shouldn’t be looking at my foot for signs of healing, but to spiritual sense, so I put my socks on, so I could no longer check the condition of my foot.

I had been praying with the idea that man is really spiritual not material, so I looked up to God, and reached out in thought, as if looking up beyond the sunny blue sky, even outside the material

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or human realm, to see my spiritual selfhood – to see God’s spiritual man.

And pretty much immediately I saw it – that is, I had a spiritual seeing experience. In my heavenward gaze, I saw an abstract image that was somewhat geometrical, and seemed to have a reflective quality to it. It was like overlapping triangular patterns of ice, held vertically, with a twinkling brightness shining through. But the visual representation was not the important part. When I looked at it, I automatically knew things. Seeing this mirror-like abstract representation was conveying to me pure spiritual information.

It soon gave way to a more ethereal view that had a sparkling goodness to it. The sense that I got from it was “wholeness.” Since then I’ve struggled to be more descriptive, to elaborate or better do it justice, and what I continue to come up with is still wholeness. It simply had an overwhelming quality of fathomless, ineffable, over-the-top, wholeness, with many exclamation points.

On the heels of comprehending that wholeness was the awareness that, due to this extraordinary and perfect wholeness, it could not possibly have a problem.

Then that view expanded to include me as its reflection, as if I was its image in a mirror consciously looking out on the original – that perfect wholeness. I was aware that I was related to, in fact defined by, this wholeness. I had a relationship to the wholeness I was seeing, as if I were its reflection in a mirror. That defined me. That perfect wholeness was my source. Then I became

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specifically aware of the precision and exactness of my conscious reflection to that original.

I immediately knew that what it was, was reflected exactly in what I am. I could feel that my own identity and selfhood – my being – was a reflection of that original. With the depth of that recognition, my human beliefs were completely dominated and transformed, and I knew absolutely that I couldn't possibly have a problem either. I knew I was healed.

As I was sitting there, basking in the glow and wonder of this experience, I had no thought of my human situation, no concern, no interest. The spiritual knowing I had experienced completely superseded all of that. All this had taken place entirely above my sense of my physical self and body sitting in the lounge chair.

When all this was finished, and the whole process may have taken less than half a minute, my awareness of my physical surroundings returned, where I was sitting in the lounge chair on the patio in the summer sun. Immediately I felt a tingling in my foot, like pins and needles, that lasted a second or two. I thought to myself, that must be the physical healing taking place; although it had already taken place completely in my mind before I even landed back on the ground, so to speak. It seemed like my physical sense of my self was simply conforming to the spiritual, where the healing had already taken place.

I put on my shoes and laced them up, had lunch with my parents, took the train to Boston, walked a half-mile with luggage to visit with my sister, and then took a bus back to the ship that night. I never looked at my foot or had any problem with it after that.

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In retrospect, it has seemed that what I first saw wasn't actually me – that wholeness, that spiritual man. It wasn't just my spiritual selfhood, it was way bigger, it was a universal – as if one infinite spiritual manifestation of God – what we call the perfect man. Perhaps my existence was, and is, just one individual reflected instance of that astounding spiritual wholeness. As are you.

Spiritual reasoning – law and evidence (1969)

In my NROTC training, senior year, we studied the military legal system. I remember one time, being in my dorm room, having very uncomfortable symptoms of a seasonal illness, and using my new legal training as a basis for my spiritual treatment. It was a reasoning process that started with the law, and, as if in a trial, I knew the law of divine Love was on my side, not any material law of illness. Next, I argued the evidence. The evidence of the physical senses was determined to be inadmissible, and the evidence of spiritual sense revealed that I was made well and kept well, as a reflection of God. The accuser didn't have a leg to stand on.

As I continued with that line of spiritual reasoning, I became so aware of the lopsided verdict in my favor that I laughed out loud, soon dozed off, and woke up the next morning completely well.

Spending one's life (1970)

One time in a mechanical engineering class, the professor was talking about a subject dear to us – Von Karman vortex shedding frequencies. This refers to the vibration of fluid flow passing around a cylinder. At some point, as he was writing on the

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blackboard, the professor said, "Lots of men have spent their lives studying this."

When he said that, it triggered a picture in my mind of spending a coin for a drink at a bar. I just thought about the idea of spending my life, like it was a coin I would flip on a bar. The question it raised in my mind in that moment was, "OK, you have one coin, how are you going to spend it?"

Butterflies in Annapolis (1970)

It was our first crew race of the season, with Navy and Syracuse, and we were staying in the USNA Field House in Annapolis, waiting to bus over to the boathouse and launch our Cornell eight-man shell on the Severn River. We were just resting in our racks, trying to ward off extreme butterflies that seemed to have set in from prerace jitters.

I was reading a CS Sentinel I'd brought along for the trip, without any particular theme to pray about, but just seeking relief and inspiration. I don't remember what I was reading, but at some point, some spiritual truth touched my thought, and my butterflies were gone, replaced by a deep sense of peaceful confidence.

I was the Commodore and stroke of the varsity crew, so I had a leadership role. This sweet inspiration enabled me to walk around to each bunk and offer words of encouragement. I treasured being able to share with my fellow rowers some of the peace and confidence that had come to me.

Later that day, with a brisk headwind and white caps on the river, we won the race nicely. I treasure the photo of the

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Superintendent of the Naval Academy handing me a very large brass trophy.

David and Goliath or Jesus in the garden (1970)

As I was graduating from college and beginning my active duty in the Navy, the war in Vietnam was still raging, and I had serious reservations about taking up a combatant role. To make it a little more challenging, after my request for a non-combatant shipboard assignment, I received orders to be the gunnery officer on a destroyer. As I was about to head off to gunnery school, I called my former Sunday School teacher, Joe Heard, and talked with him about my reservations.

He contrasted the stories of David and Goliath with Jesus's healing the chief priest's servant's ear in the Garden of Gethsemane. He told me the issue isn't whether we fight against evil, the issue is what weapons we have proved. As we prove each level of spiritual dominion, the weapons we bring to bear are elevated, whether it be with a sword, a shepherd's sling, or through spiritual healing.

The persuasiveness of that point may be hard to explain in few words, but the gist of it quieted my thought, and, thankfully, no one was the worse for my year as a gunnery officer.

Couldn't breathe (1971)

While living on the destroyer, one day in port I was not feeling well and was lying on my bunk in the forward officers' quarters a few decks down. I had pains in my chest, my diaphragm was sore, and I began hyperventilating. Then I found I was barely able

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to gasp for breath. It felt like a potentially life-threatening situation.

The way out was a ladder that led up to a hatch and then to another ladder to another hatch to the main deck. I'd often imagined what it would be like to have to clamber out in an emergency, perhaps with the ocean pouring down through the hatches. At that point in the evening, everyone else was up in the wardroom watching a movie. I realized that if I wanted to call for help, I had no breath and couldn't speak above a whisper. I was completely alone.

My thought about it quickly became one of gratitude. Lying there on my back I realized, if my life depended on my being able to call out, "Help," I could have been a goner. But I knew my life wasn't dependent on that, but on my ability to turn wholeheartedly to God in prayer, which I did right then. The thought that came to me was how wonderful it was that I had Christian Science and knew how to turn directly to God as my ever-present help.

In that moment, I knew that all the help I could ever need was right there with me. I didn't need to even speak, not even to whisper, but just to reach out in thought to God. I felt that divine Love's presence was all around me, and God's love was caring for me. I was overcome with gratitude for Christian Science and for knowing that God was my help, right there where I was. It made me feel so grateful and loved and secure. I peacefully dozed off to sleep and woke a while later, completely well.

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Goal setting (1971)

My dad had taken up interest in some management tapes by Earl Nightingale, entitled “Lead the Field,” and he gave me a set of tapes. When I had time off from my shipboard duties in port, I would occasionally park in a vacant lot on the Navy base, looking out over the water, and listen to those tapes on the cassette player in my VW bug. There was one tape about the importance of setting life goals. Knowing that I must, I decided to commit to a goal. It is interesting how hard it was to actually say to myself that my goal was to be a Christian Science practitioner. It seemed presumptuous to aspire to such a level of spirituality, but nonetheless, I did and said it, and that became my goal.

Sprained ankle (1971)

After almost a year on the ship, I was not very happy being there and kept fantasizing about how I might get out. Several of my fellow junior officers had publicly spoken out against the Vietnam War, and they were quietly released from active duty, but I couldn't do that. At one point the thought hit me, what if the mental anguish I'm feeling isn't the ship, what if it's me? What if I go somewhere else and take this problem with me? That was a scary thought.

In the meantime, a bunch of us were off-base, playing basketball, never my strong suit, and after jumping for a rebound, I came down hard, sideways on my ankle, and heard an awful tearing sound – never a good sign. Back on the ship I limped around on crutches for a few days, but also got down to praying about it.

As I began searching my thoughts, I realized I needed to be regarding my shipmates differently. So, as well as praying for my

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foot, I started praying for those around me. I'd go down the roster, one by one, and express gratitude for the good and God-like qualities each was expressing, such as unselfish service, courage, intelligence, diligence, and so on. After praying to appreciate the good qualities expressed by each of my fellow officers, and thinking of each one as a spiritual reflection of God, it was as if I felt an actual weight lift off my shoulders, and my ankle quickly recovered.

A few months later, when I was due for orders to my next ship, my detailer asked, "How about shore duty in Washington D.C.?" After that, everyone kept asking me, "Who do you know?"

Praying about my roommate (1972)

When I arrived for duty in Washington, D.C, I had a studio apartment, and one of my college rowing buddies ended up staying with me, as he had modest income and no other lodging. We were in very close quarters. At some point, it seemed like he was dealing with some issues I knew nothing about. He became unusually quiet and seemed pretty down on himself. I couldn't snap him out of it, and it was starting to get to me.

At one point, I went up on the roof of the apartment building to pray. My turning point came while praying with MBE's sentence, "God expresses in man the infinite idea, forever developing itself, broadening and rising higher and higher from a boundless basis."¹⁰ I saw that God was expressing in my friend the infinite idea, that is, it was God that was doing the expressing. It didn't matter what it might look like my friend was doing or not doing, because God was doing the expressing in him. I was healed in

¹⁰ *S&H*, p. 258:13-15

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that moment. Nothing changed, but it didn't bother me anymore. I knew that right where my friend was, God was expressing in him the infinite idea.

We kept in touch over the years and several decades later, he happened to come through town where I was living, and we went out for dinner. Afterward, he insisted on picking up the tab. He said, "I owe you." Then he said, "Thank you for being so patient with me."

Watching my thoughts (1972)

I was recently talking with someone about the importance of watching one's thoughts, and it reminded me of learning that lesson some time ago. When I was stationed in Washington, DC and occasionally serving overnight as the duty officer at the Navy HQ downtown, I found a stash of adult magazines at my disposal. What I learned is probably best summarized in saying, to control one's thoughts in the first instance, or they will control you in the second, to borrow from MBE¹¹.

In other words, I found that exercising willpower against bodily temptations was too late in the chain of causation. It was much more effective to watch one's thoughts and not start down an undesirable mental path, rather than going as far as one could in the wrong direction and then trying to rely on willpower to keep one's behavior at a minimum standard. I distinctly remember saying to myself: "Do you mean I have to watch my thoughts all the time!?" Answer: "Yes."

¹¹ *S&H*, p. 234:26-27. "You must control evil thoughts in the first instance, or they will control you in the second."

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[In the chronology, these last two stories go in the middle of this next one, which spans over a year.]

Finding my CS teacher (1971-1972)

When my ship was in port, I had been occasionally meeting with a CS practitioner who was the CS Armed Forces Minister in the Norfolk, VA area. One time he and I were giving a CS service at a local institution, and as we were leaving, standing in the parking lot, I asked him how to give a Christian Science treatment.

He said that involved CS teaching, and he wasn't an authorized teacher, but he could give me a CS treatment – out loud. While we stood there in the parking lot, he looked up and began, and today all I remember is, “The divine Mind ...,” in his distinctive Florida accent. That got me started giving regular CS treatments – establishing a sense of God's presence and supremacy, declaring the specific spiritual truths about the case, and systematically denying any suggestions of error until one gained some spiritual sense of realization or conviction or, in my case, at least some glimmer of recognition.

From time to time, I would pray for an hour for my shipmates or to deal with issues at hand. Some evenings, when everyone else was watching the movie in the wardroom, I'd close myself in an empty stateroom and pray. At first, it was such an exertion, to pray for a whole hour, that the intervals between my prayer sessions could be measured in months.

As a result of this activity, I came to realize how important it was for me to have Christian Science primary class instruction (a two-week course in intermediate CS). I asked my practitioner friend how to find the right CS teacher, and he gave me what was

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perhaps the best advice I ever received – he said, “Pray,” and then gave me a big smile. After that, one of the things I would pray about was to find the right teacher. Every so often I would go over the list of teachers to see if any names would stand out, but none ever lit up.

Fast forward about a year, and now I’m off the ship and living in Washington, D.C. and a few months away from completing my active duty. I attended a CS Regional Youth meeting in Philadelphia, and talked with a CS practitioner who was leading an informal discussion group about CS class instruction. He and I had met before, and he knew I was in the Navy. In our conversation, all of a sudden, he said he knew just the right teacher for me, and that the class would be starting soon, so I should just make the call. The teacher he was so enthusiastically recommending turned out to be Joe Heard, who had been such a life-changing spiritual mentor for me.

Right after that conversation, I thought about what an incredible coincidence that was. I mentioned it to a few friends while at the meetings, and they enthusiastically encouraged me to make the call. Someone even handed me a dime to use at a nearby pay-phone. In pondering what to do, however, it seemed to me like that was a human coincidence; I just didn’t get the feeling it was God talking.

That was a big disappointment, because I had recently learned that most CS classes were held during the summer months, and it was already into June. I would be getting out of the Navy at the end of July, and I became dismayed when it occurred to me that I would likely have to wait another whole year to have class. But I didn’t want to leave my thinking on that note. Over the next few

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weeks I prayed to know that God would teach me whatever I needed to know to do whatever He had for me to do. That was a comfort, and I just trusted myself to God's care and left the whole matter in His hands.

Meanwhile, I completed my Navy active-duty tour and went back home to the Boston area to look for a job. I was praying with a paper by Adam Dickey entitled, "Place." In particular, I worked with the lines, "You do not have to plan, to think how or when or where. This is God's business. Your business is to reflect, listen to and obey when the call comes."

I was trying to apply these ideas to my job search. There was one organization I was trying to avoid, where a number of my friends appeared to be well under-employed, but I kept being led to apply. I finally relented, despite my personal reservations, and just a few days into my job search, was able to arrange for an interview. After completing that job interview the next day, I felt like I had done what I was supposed to do. As I walked out the door of that building, I said, "OK, Father, what do I do now?"

Clear as a bell, the thought came to me, "Call Mr. L. and ask about class instruction." At that point, my internal dialogue said, "But I don't know if Mr. L. is the teacher for me." I had heard him speak at the Philadelphia meeting, a few months before, but had never considered him for a teacher. The next thought came, "Just call him and talk about it." I walked up to a payphone on the sidewalk and placed a call to Mr. L., who happened to have an office nearby. His secretary answered, and she suggested that I call back in a month, since he would be leaving town soon and would be away for two weeks.

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I knew what that meant. “He’s going away for two weeks?” I exclaimed, perhaps rhetorically. Then I said, “I need to talk with him now!” A few hours later I was in his office, telling Mr. L. that I wanted to learn more about the science of being, and a few days later, that Saturday, a week after my release from the Navy, I was in another city, beginning two weeks of CS primary class instruction. And he was definitely the teacher for me.

It was wonderful to have had those experiences on the way to class, because I had already proved that we can turn to God in prayer, actually hear his voice, be obedient to his direction, and follow the path he provides. That was an excellent spiritual foundation to build on.

Starting my practice (1972)

Before I had CS class instruction, I had been somewhat intermittently practicing giving prayerful CS treatments, and beginning in June 1972, after attending the CS Regional Youth meeting in Philadelphia, I began spending 15 minutes a day praying, while sitting in the empty bathtub in my shared studio apartment.

During class, I learned that there were a number of audio recordings, from recent world-wide practitioners’ conferences, that would be coming around to the branch churches, and they would be available to anyone who was giving time to the public practice. I did want to hear those tapes.

When I got home from class, my dad was feeling a little under the weather, so I went to my room and prayed for him. That began my part-time public practice, where I was soon spending 90

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minutes a day giving CS treatments, mostly for world problems, and occasionally (that is, rarely) in response to calls.

Chest rash (1972)

During the summer, a rash appeared on my chest that spread to about the size of a dinner plate. I prayed about it off and on, handling everything that I could think of but seeing no results. After more than a few months, well into the fall, I knew I'd done the praying, so I declared to myself, "This is gone, I am healed, and I'm not going to look at this or pray about it ever again." A few days later I happened to glance at my chest and saw the rash was gone.

Box company allergy (1972)

After CS class, the search for my first job after the Navy continued, and I was primarily focused on listening for God's direction and following, no matter what. I ended up accepting a job to be a shift foreman in a corrugated box factory.

After some time working at the box plant, I found rashes were forming on my eyelids, which became raw; my eyes were watering, and my nasal passages were irritated. When I noticed these symptoms, my first thought was, "I'm allergic to paper dust," which seemed like a reasonable superficial diagnosis.

I looked up allergy in the dictionary and one definition was, "suppressed irritation." Then I said to myself, "I'm allergic to the box factory." Accordingly, I prayed specifically to love a few co-workers who had been contentious and critical, and were making my life stressful, and all the symptoms quickly and permanently disappeared.

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Not in my thought (1973)

After the training was completed, my main assignment at the box factory was to be late-night shift foreman in an area that made giant boxes for furniture and mattresses, and I was responsible for about 40 union workers. There were a number of colorful characters.

One individual seemed to go out of his way to drive me and my boss crazy. He would take frequent bathroom breaks throughout the shift, and slow-walk to the men's room and return sometime later, in slow-motion. When I talked with him about it, he said, "Don't mess with me, I have friends on the Labor Board in at the State House."

Having had good success praying to heal other relationship problems, I set to work on this one. I prayed to know he was a child of God, that God was expressing in him the infinite idea, and so forth. Even after praying, it was hard for me not to conclude that he was one of the most obnoxious people I'd ever met. Accordingly, I began declaring, "There are no obnoxious mortal minds. There are no obnoxious mortal minds," over and over, pacing back and forth in my living room. After a while like this, a question popped into my mind, "Where? Where are there no obnoxious mortal minds?"

My answer was, "In my thought!" There are no obnoxious mortal minds in my thought. I don't have to accept that. I don't have to let that error about God's man into my consciousness. I knew I had dominion over that, because I didn't have to let it in my thought!

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When I got to work that night, my boss, Louie, came up to me with a big smile. Our friend had come in during the day shift and quit.

AM/FM clock radio (1973)

After getting out of CS class, I was really attuned to the idea of listening to God, being aware of spiritual intuitions, and responding appropriately. One evening at the box factory, I was looking for Louie and listening for direction. The idea came to me to go to the cafeteria, so I started walking in that direction. After a few steps I thought of several reasons why Louie wouldn't be in the cafeteria, so I turned around and started walking in the other direction. Then I said to myself, "Are you going to trust your spiritual intuitions or your human reasoning?" I turned about-face again and started walking back to the cafeteria. As I stepped through one door to the cafeteria, I looked to the other side and saw Louie coming in the other door.

Sometime after, I needed to buy a wedding gift for some friends. I walked into a nearby Bloomingdales, not having any idea what to get them, and I asked God, "OK, Father, what do I get for (my friends)?" The clear thought came to me, "An AM-FM clock radio." I said to myself, "That isn't a wedding present, no one gives an AM-FM clock radio for a wedding present." Continuing with the internal dialogue, I said to myself, "Are you going to trust your intuition or not?" Accordingly, I bought them a nice AM-FM clock radio as a wedding present.

Some weeks later, after their wedding, around ten o'clock at night, I got an excited phone call. They were opening their wedding presents. They told me that before the wedding they

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said to each other, "One thing we will have to buy after the wedding is an AM-FM clock radio, because no one will give us one of those as a wedding present." I told them a little about how it came to be. We were all pretty excited about that clock radio.

To understand Soul (1973)

I was walking in the woods one day, and considering MBE's statement, "Whoever is incompetent to explain Soul would be wise not to undertake the explanation of body."¹² I prayed, "Dear God, please teach me about Soul, and I don't care what it takes." I could feel in that moment that I was making a serious commitment and perhaps an open-ended one that would have consequences.

Leaving the box company (1973)

My time working at the box company was challenging. My dad said, "Daniel had to spend a night in the lion's den, but he didn't go back every night." One night, about the time a normal person would be heading for bed, I was driving to work for the late-night shift. I was thinking about my determination not to look for another job until I had finished whatever spiritual work I had to do.

As I was driving along, I said to myself, "I'm going to pray my way out of this job if it takes me twenty years." The internal dialogue continued, "OK, if you do that, how will you be different after twenty years?" I thought about this, and my answer was, "I will think differently." To which the next thought was, "Why don't

¹² *S&H*, p. 200: 8-9

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you think differently now?” And so I had a new standpoint from which to pray.

I had the opportunity to take some vacation during the summer plant shutdown period, and I went with a friend to his parents’ cottage on a lovely little lake in New Hampshire. While there, out floating on an air mattress on the tranquil lake, I prayed about my job situation, and approached it by knowing that I didn’t need to escape from anything or get away from anything, because I was never outside of the kingdom of heaven.

It had become my habit to ask God every day as I lay down to sleep if it was time to change jobs, and one day I felt that the answer came back as a yes. It was just a clear, quiet confidence that the time was now. Soon after, in talking with a personnel professional who was the friend of a friend, he looked at my resume and said I should just figure out where I wanted to work, show up and ask for a job. For some reason, that unusual advice resonated. I knew it was for me. After giving it some thought, I picked a well-respected company in the area and headed out one day on a mission, to get a new job.

When I got to this sprawling industrial plant, I found the parking lot was virtually empty, because the factory was on a two-week summer shutdown. Nevertheless, I had a strong sense of purpose, and was undeterred. I found a payphone at a nearby gas station and called into the factory, where I was told that one person was in the office and he would speak with me. I drove up to a back door and was admitted, and had a conversation with a personnel guy who just happened to be catching up on some work in the office by himself.

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He knew of an opening and made arrangements for me to talk with some managers when they came back from shutdown. Not too many days later, I went for interviews, and was offered a job that fit exactly my previous experience. At the end of my interview, after making me an offer, the hiring manager asked, "So how did you find out about this opening? We weren't planning on posting it until next week."

Thinking about Spirit (1973)

After I had CS primary class instruction, my CS teacher's teacher, who was no longer with us, became one of my role models. One time she closed down her CS practice in New York City for the season, rented a cottage in New Hampshire and spent the summer mostly in a hammock thinking about Love. This resonated with me, and it was clear that spending time meditating on God was a very useful thing to do.

I remember one time when I spent an hour just thinking about God as Spirit and all the things that could possibly mean. In a quiet and cheerfully lit CS Reading Room in the town next to where I lived, I set up shop in a comfortable armchair and then used the four adjectives from one of MBE's definitions for God¹³ to help define my ultimate of Spirit, to modify it, elaborate on it, and to help me discern new meanings.

I methodically thought and meditated about Spirit, as a name for God, apart from any limitations of my senses, benevolent in its effects, powerful and unopposed, and boundless in its extent. It was challenging to concentrate on those ideas and to keep thinking about them without having my mind wander for too long to the pictures on the wall or the lovely day outside.

¹³ *S&H*, p. 465:9. "God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love."

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Afterward, I could not have told you of any particularly striking ideas I had, other than remembering a few of the faintest wisps of insight and having a page of jotted notes. I remember the day after that, too. The whole world looked different to me. It was as if the world I saw around me had been softly infused with spiritual light, and, for a few days anyway, I had a palpable awareness of the presence and supremacy of spiritual goodness.

The first page of my spiritual notebook, begun after CS class in the summer of 1972, shows the results of thinking about MBE's seven names for God, and what it would mean to compare them to each other. From then on, I made it a practice periodically to spend an hour meditating on the spiritual meanings of those words, as a vital part of my regular study.

Time management (1973)

One Saturday morning, I awoke with great enthusiasm to begin activities I had planned for the day. Then I stopped and prayed to ask God what He wanted me to do. An idea popped into my head that I had not considered, but it seemed like a good idea.

Accordingly, I spent the day visiting with my parents at their summer place in Rockport. I felt like I was letting God, the divine Mind, divine Principle, govern my day.

A few weeks later, I was in Boston visiting my CS teacher and reading addresses he had given to his association of students. While reading and pondering, it struck me that since divine Principle was governing my days, I always have time to do all the things I love to do. It was just that simple. Would divine Love plan a day for me that included things I couldn't do? Would divine Love plan a day for me that was not possible?

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We always have enough time to do everything we need to do, because God would never put into our day any more than we can handle or more than we can do. I was healed right then of a feeling of being harried or rushed or having a schedule that was too full. From that moment on, I've always known that obedience to God is the ultimate answer to the challenge of time management. Because God is always ordering our days, harmoniously and productively, and all we need to do is listen and follow.

Feeling the love of Principle (1973)

One time I had some sort of physical illness, I don't remember exactly, perhaps some flu-like thing, and I was praying about it in the evening sitting at my desk. I read the following sentence from S&H (p. xi:9), "The physical healing of Christian Science results now, as in Jesus' time, from the operation of divine Principle, before which sin and disease lose their reality in human consciousness and disappear as naturally and as necessarily as darkness gives place to light and sin to reformation."

At that time I felt like I had been striving to be obedient to God, divine Principle, as if I had been making deposits of service and obedience in my spiritual bank account. Now here was divine Principle doing something wonderful for me. I knew I could count on the operation of divine Principle for healing. I felt a wave of appreciation and confidence for that love and care of God, as the divine Principle, and a sense of gratitude that it was operating in my life, and I was healed.

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A more relaxed attitude (1973)

I was highly motivated to work out my salvation, to improve my practice, and to grow spiritually. Apparently, without realizing it, I was feeling somewhat stressed or burdened by a sense of urgency. One day, I encountered this passage in Unity of Good, by MBE (p. 5.): “ ... undisturbed by the frightened sense of any need of attempting to solve every Life-problem in a day.” This passage, and the paragraphs before and after, spoke directly to me in that moment, and brought a wave of palpable relief and a more relaxed outlook moving forward.

Lessons from meetings (~1974)

Some of the high points of my spiritual experiences in the 1970s were attending or participating in occasional Regional Youth or Biennial Meetings held for young people by The Mother Church (TMC). Here are three ideas I’ve found most useful over the intervening years:

The first was a keynote address given by L. Ivimy Gwalter at TMC. It was conspicuous for its no-nonsense directness and brevity, perhaps based on the idea that the less one says, the more impact it has. This was at the end of a few full days of talks, panel discussions, and workshops, and was to be the wrap-up for this meeting attended by thousands of young adults. Miss Gwalter had quite a reputation and expectations were high.

She came up to the podium and may have said some introductory greetings, but then she said, “Open your *Science and Healths* to page 275.” Then she read to us: “The starting-point of divine Science is that God, Spirit, is All-in-all, and that there is no other

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might nor Mind, -- that God is Love, and therefore He is divine Principle.”¹⁴

Then she said, “Turn to page 492,” and she read, “For right reasoning, there should be but one fact before the thought, namely, spiritual existence.”

I don’t remember what she said after that. It was brief. But it was clear that she had made a point to tell us what was really important. And it was memorable.

My second memory, may have been from an annual meeting around that time, where DeWitt John spoke of being on a branch church board where he was outnumbered one to four on what he felt was a very important issue. He was even considering whether he should resign from that board. After praying about it quite urgently, it came to him that there were only two important issues: (1) His trust in God’s disposition of events, and (2) His love for the members.

I’ve found this invaluable, not only for church issues but for almost any issue of concern. The one that stands out most in my memory was about 30 years later when a customer requested me to provide him with some training. As I was walking him through the topic, I could see his eyelids fluttering as he was unsuccessfully fighting off sleep, perhaps from a combination of fatigue and boredom. I was frustrated because I realized that achieving his goal was probably hopeless, and I resisted the impulse to say so. I realized the important part was our

¹⁴ The last phrase in this sentence has often been a curiosity to students. Recently, I realized that this phrase makes perfect sense if one considers it self-evident, as she apparently did, that *Love is the divine Principle*.

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relationship. I should just trust in God's disposition of events and love him. That was an important moment for me, and our friendly relationship continued. In this case, the important point was that love prevail. When we get focused on a mission or a goal, it is good to remember that the ultimate goal is always our trust in God and our love for one another.

My third memory is a talk by Heidi Boyman who spoke about starting out in her CS practice working at home. She told how she kept being interrupted, by deliverymen, neighbors, the telephone, the dog and on and on. After praying about it, she realized that everyone who seemed to be interrupting or imposing on her was simply asking, "Will you see what's true about me." She realized that everyone coming to her was actually part of her practice and not an interruption. I've used that so frequently – "Will you see what's true about me?"

Repentance severe (1974)

I mention this experience as encouragement for those along the path of spiritual growth. At times we may have experiences where we feel somewhat like a reptile shedding its skin. As we throw off our mortal self-identification, with the cleansing and uplifting power of spiritual self-identification, the old material or mortal sense of self feels increasingly shabby. It almost seems like our repentance becomes chronic, like we will never get through it.

I remember being at an inspirational meeting, in a big auditorium, and feeling like my mortal self was so soiled, so shameful and worthless, that I vividly felt like crawling away from my old self, naked, under the chairs, on my hands and knees.

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When that blessed day come, rejoice that your name is written in heaven. Continuing to hold to your spiritual sense of self, your actual true selfhood, as God's own reflection, unfolds your rebirth in His likeness – indeed, putting off the old man and putting on the new. Persistence in spiritual Truth ultimately wins.

Praying about purity (1974)

MBE writes, “ ... the corner-stone of all spiritual building is purity.”¹⁵ As one aspiring to practice CS, I naturally tried to keep a focus on purity. For years it seemed to me that attaining spiritual purity was one of those indispensable spiritual attributes that one aspires to but never quite achieves. I was more than pleasantly surprised when, one day after praying about it specifically, purity revealed itself to be effortlessly existing in God, the divine Mind, infinite Spirit, and, consequently, native to God's spiritual man. I realized purity was not an unattainable quality based on some level of impeccable superhuman behavior. It was a quality inherent in God that we can naturally reflect.

The key to attaining progress here was to treat purity like any other Godlike quality we might want to claim. We have a right to spiritual purity through divine reflection. The secret is not to look for a path to human purity; true purity separate from God is an oxymoron. Striving to attain it is an exercise in futility. Attaining spiritual purity is not primarily behavior based. We have but to fill our thought with all the ways that God is pure – pure Mind, pure Spirit, pure Love, and so forth. Then we are literally reflecting divine purity, and that is the only way we can ever get it. As we reflect on pure Mind without a hint of error, pure Spirit without a thought of matter, pure Love without a murmur of personal sense, and so forth, it will naturally purify our human

¹⁵ *S&H*, p. 241:26

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experience. Spiritual purity is innate to us as spiritual ideas of God. Like any infinite spiritual quality we might aspire to, we may feel like we demonstrate it by degrees, but we have the right to claim all there is of divine purity as organic to our true and native identity, and we can reflect that purity in consciousness right now.

Letting angels do the talking (1974)

One day I went to visit my mom, where they lived in the next town, and we were sitting in the living room talking. I had been doing lots of studying and praying, as I was between jobs and spending time on my practice. My mom was talking about how she had listened to a radio talk show where people were calling in and describing their encounters with ghosts. She seemed to have been taken in by this and said, with obvious concern, "I don't want to see any ghosts."

I thought to myself, this is nonsense and she should know better; but I also realized saying that would not be helpful and would probably be hurtful or possibly start an argument.

As she continued to talk about this, I began prayerfully declaring silently to myself, "Divine Love is all-in-all." Just over and over again, I declared this and knew it to myself, deeply. After a few moments, it almost seemed like the light in the room got a little brighter, as if tinted by a soft effulgence. Then I heard my mom say, "I know there are no such things as ghosts, and there is nothing to be afraid of."

I've always thought that Love's angels came to her and told her that. We don't always have to be the one to say what needs to be said, but we can embrace others in our knowing of the allness

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of divine Love and just let Love's angels do the talking. As my CS teacher used to say, "We don't correct by correcting, we correct by knowing."

Obedience (1974)

I was working at a big company that was undergoing a downturn, and I was laid off along with hundreds of others. While considering what to do next, I began a schedule of spiritual study, meditation, and prayer for eight hours a day, and continued for a number of weeks, hoping that perhaps my next job might be the full-time public practice. I also scheduled one day a week in a shared practitioners' office nearby, where I would go to pray and be available to the public.

One day I got a call from a friend who knew I was between jobs. She was working at the CS Church Center in Boston, about ten miles east of my apartment. She told me they were hiring temps to pack books for shipping to Reading Rooms before the holidays, and it would be paying a little over the minimum wage. I thanked her for her thoughtful suggestion. After the call it was obvious to me that I wouldn't be following up on that, considering my background and experience, perhaps I was a little indignant, and I gave it no more thought.

Later that night, as I was praying and giving CS treatments for world problems as part of my practice, at a point where I was in a somewhat elevated sense of spiritual consciousness, the thought came to me clearly to apply for that temp position. I was incredulous! I spent the whole next day asking God if He really meant that. The feeling I got was that He wasn't going to tell me

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twice. I ended up swallowing my pride and taking that work for about six weeks, and I learned a number of important lessons.

Who shall be greatest? (1974)

In my temporary assignment, I was aware of a mental atmosphere that seemed to be more critical than I was used to, and I took some time to pray about it. I learned that in a religious environment, it is not unusual for people to think in terms of a spiritual pecking order, setting some on pedestals as most holy or spiritually minded, just as Jesus's disciples disputed among themselves, "Who shall be greatest?" Once that hierarchy is set up, personal sense makes comparisons and feels envy, which is jealousy with a side order of malice, and this dark side of envy spurs criticism. The antidote is to recognize that only God is the greatest, and skip over the whole pedestal to envy to criticism cycle.

What do you think? (1974)

When that temp job ended just before the holidays, I happened to be visiting one of my high school buddies at his home nearby. After exchanging holiday pleasantries with his parents, his dad asked me about my work. I told him I was between jobs and, to that, he simply said, "Come see me at my office."

I had become so used to listening for God's direction, that I was reluctant to interview with my friend's dad, just on his say-so. Accordingly, I prayed and prayed, asking, "Father, is this what I should do?" I guess I was looking for a divine thumbs-up. Ultimately, I sensed His answer was, "What do you think?"

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My interpretation of that answer is that, at some level, there aren't really two of us, God and his reflection, but one. Increasingly we need to accept that oneness, and take responsibility, and do what we think is right.

If I have someone working for me, I want them to follow my instructions but also to do what makes sense, and not to be timorously asking, "Mother may I?" There is probably some more hair-splitting on that, but that's the general idea.

A few days later, I visited my friend's dad in his office, where he was Chairman of the Board of The Gillette Company. I ended up working there for three years, and it gave me many wonderful experiences, overseas travel, a substantial business education, and established the direction for the rest of my professional career.

It wasn't until looking back on this chronology that I saw a possible connection between learning more about humility and obedience, and the wonderful experiences that followed.

Handling generic error (~1975)

A friend gave me a booklet a CS practitioner had written on the topic of handling (that is, making nothing of) animal magnetism.¹⁶ Animal magnetism is a term used in CS to name beliefs in generic and primitive evil. In trying to apply the lessons of this booklet, I spent some time one Sunday morning, while preparing for my Sunday School class, specifically and energetically knowing and declaring the unreality and powerlessness of hate, malice,

¹⁶ The booklet, "Animal Magnetism" by Ann Beals, can be found on the Web.

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cruelty, spite, and such, and also knowing the spiritual counter-facts of God's goodness and power that neutralize and dispel any such beliefs. At one point, I got a sense of clarity, and it was like looking into another room. I could see into this room that only spiritual goodness was operating, and it was completely unopposed.

Discovering the four rivers (1975)

One Saturday morning, in what had turned into a deep spiritual study session, I began to learn about "the four rivers."¹⁷ As part of preparing for teaching Sunday School that week, I had been studying the CS Weekly Bible Lesson for several hours when I started to see an invisible structure in the ideas. As this structure gradually appeared in thought, it showed how the four adjectives MBE uses in her definition of God in the CS textbook¹⁸ correlate with the definitions of the four rivers in her Glossary.

I was excited to see how these words related to each other. It was the dawning of a recognition of an invisible structure to spiritual ideas. This structure is also in accord with what she calls, "The periods of spiritual ascension ... in which beauty, sublimity, purity, and holiness ... appear ..."¹⁹ I've since observed how these four rivers, or four levels, correlate with mankind's historical spiritual evolution and with the demonstration of individual human progress. If I'd just been "doing the Lesson," I would have missed it.

¹⁷ These are named in Genesis 2:10-14, and MBE addresses them individually in the "Glossary" of *S&H*, pp. 585, 587, 588 and 593.

¹⁸ *S&H*, p. 465:9, "incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite"

¹⁹ *S&H*, p. 509:24

Part Two – Transition

CS Sentinel article (1976)

I had an article published in the CS Sentinel, April 3, 1976, entitled, “Seeing Spiritual Existence.” From earlier experiences, I had observed that spiritual seeing is believing. That is, the spiritual insights and perceptions that accompany spiritual understanding naturally transform and elevate our beliefs, often with resulting healing effect. That being the case, it seemed just a matter of how best to nurture one’s spiritual seeing.

I haven’t found a copy of my original manuscript, but it was somewhat longer than the editors’ proof returned to me for approval. I had written it as a CS Journal article, and it was edited to appear in the Sentinel, which is generally more concise and accessible. I found the edited proof to be a little choppy at the outset, but most of the key points survived. The main example in the article was taken from the healing of my foot in 1969, which I summarized into a paragraph. I didn’t try to follow what was edited out but was just happy to have it published. You can read this article at www.hyperthot.com/162_sse.htm

One thing I remember, that was edited out of my submission, was my somewhat experimental use of a phrase something like, “the divine energy of infinitely causative spiritually mental goodness,” in referring to the divine. That phrase may have evolved from a conversation I had with a seasoned CS, where he marveled that it had become almost like he was, “worshipping pure goodness.” I knew my phrase was pushing on some boundaries, and I’m now sure it was for the best that it was not published. Nevertheless, the emergence of those ideas may have signaled the beginning of my transition in perspective, into what I later associated with the “fourth river.”

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A spiritual milestone (1976)

After teaching Sunday School, on a glorious, sunny day in late May, I was driving home with the top down on my VW bug, and, crossing a bridge over the railroad tracks, passed by a very pretty teenage girl walking along the sidewalk, dressed in her Sunday best. She looked so fresh and pure and lovely in the sunshine. Her goodness just sparkled.

Her loveliness captured my imagination, and when I got home, her impression was still powerfully persistent in my mind. I realized that if I kept thinking about her in a personal or physical way, it would lead me in a wrong direction. After all, I was an aspiring Christian Science practitioner and a Sunday School teacher! I found, however, as much as I tried, I just couldn't put her out of my mind. It wasn't enough merely to discipline my thought or replace the thoughts that were tempting me with striving for purity, statements of spiritual truth, or denials of the errors that were so obvious. I could tell that I had spiritual work to do. And I needed to know I wasn't separated from whatever goodness was beckoning me.

After grabbing some lunch, I sat down at my desk to commit my afternoon to study and prayer and to translate the thoughts and feelings that were so attracting me, into words and thence to spiritual ideas I knew I could keep for real. I wanted to know the spiritual truths that were knocking on my mental door. I wanted the spiritual substance, and I wanted to know the words.

As I followed my thoughts and feelings, and looked up various words in the Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, along with using the dictionary and concordances, my thinking was drawn to the realization that spiritual ideas alone held the answers to my yearnings. I still have my handwritten study notes

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from that day. I've interspersed most of them here in the narrative:

- *He who perceives the true idea of Life loses corporeal desires and torments.*²⁰
- *To be spiritually minded is Life.*²¹ *The satisfaction of Life is in being spiritually minded.*

I knew that, in theory, the satisfaction of life had to be spiritual – in being spiritually minded. But in practical terms, that seemed like a great leap into what seemed like a world of abstractions, so far from the loveliness that had captured my mind. The notes continue:

- *If to be spiritually minded is Life, then I do want to be spiritually minded and nothing can talk me out of it.*
- *There is no suggestion that to be spiritually minded is vacuity or emptiness. I will be spiritually minded.*
- *The good Life is kept from me only as I can be kept from being spiritually minded.*

As I worked with these ideas, following the words and passages where they led, I realized the only viable path forward was for me to be spiritually minded about all the joys of life. More notes:

- *I always have and will experience Life completely.*
- *Life is not confined in the forms which reflect it.*²²
- *The beauty, joy and freshness of Life are immortal and can never fade away from me, because Life is my Soul, Mind, Spirit.*

²⁰ S&H, p. 325:1 “ ... he who perceives the true idea of Life loses his belief in death.”

²¹ Romans 8:6

²² S&H, p. 331:1 “God is divine Life, and Life is no more confined to the forms that reflect it than substance is in its shadow.”

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- *The joy and satisfaction and beauty of Life is in being spiritually minded.*

After wrestling with this for some time, I could tell there was a decision to be made. It came down to making a commitment to being spiritually minded, against all else – a decision to be satisfied with having all my treasures of joy and loveliness be entirely spiritually mental in God. As this came to a head in my mind, I felt I had to choose. I had to offer up for sacrifice all my human hopes, even all my religious aspirations, all my desires and ambitions, as if on the altar of being spiritually minded. More notes:

- *... I don't want a home, family, wife, car, house, job, or supply – all I want is to be spiritually minded and nothing can stop me from being spiritually minded.*

It became clear that I could take none of that baggage with me into the kingdom of heaven. Rising to the challenge was a poignant, deeply felt moment – a moment of sacrifice, and a commitment to an ascended spiritual idealism, which at that moment seemed a stark and barren abstraction. It was like I had to trade everything that was humanly good and tangible for something that was intangible, existing only as an exalted spiritual ideal, only in the heights of my mind. (There is a dark cross drawn in the margin of the notes.) But I somehow knew it was the path I wanted to take.

After I had made what felt like that giant step, reaching for that invisible, spiritually mental substance, and most clearly, leaving all else behind, I felt a sense of peace. The notes continue:

- *Spirit is the source of all my thoughts.*
- *Because I am spiritually minded, I am satisfied.*

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- *Spirit saith, I am Life come unto me.*²³

I continued in a more relaxed way with my study, and a few moments later, suddenly, in a flood of spiritual realization, these words from a hymn virtually exploded inside me “O Life that maketh all things new.”²⁴ The words came alive, flowering and blooming in newness, freshness, and loveliness. All the sparkle, goodness, innocence and purity that I loved, were shown forth from the spiritual Life that is God, infinite Spirit. I experienced all those lovely things inside me, not just in my mind but deep down inside. I knew and experienced that I could never be separated from spiritual loveliness – that purity and goodness and the romantic hope of love forever, are not “out there” in material things and persons but are spiritual, and in all their brilliant reality, they come to us direct from God.

In considering this, I understood that the loveliness I had been drawn to, the spiritual idea that beckoned me from that human experience, was the spiritual idea of Life itself – Life as Spirit and Life in Spirit. I was completely healed of any sense of separation from all that good, in one stunning moment.

I found the newness and freshness and sparkle of Life springing up inside me. I found the spiritual “Life that maketh all things new” within. Without really knowing it, that is what I had longed for, and that is what I found.

My last notes from that day:

- *To do thy will is more than praise as words are less than deeds.*²⁵

²³ *CSH*, p. 188, words by Elizabeth C. Adams.

²⁴ *Christian Science Hymnal (CSH)*, p. 218, by Samuel Longfellow; “O Life that maketh all things new, the blooming earth, the thoughts of men ... “

²⁵ *CSH*, p. 230, words by John Greenleaf Whittier.

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That afternoon is more than a major milestone in my spiritual progress and the bestowal of a priceless spiritual treasure. It illustrates a principle and provides us with a promise. It was proof of the power of spirituality to redeem human life and to show we can experience God's renewal and holiness here and now. It was a big step of practical fulfilment, in the loveliest way, of the mission of Christian Science – to take away the sins of the world²⁶.

At that moment, all the sweet loveliness, the youthful innocence and romantic hopes, the freshness and beauty of my earlier encounter, burst inside me in a cascade of flowering joy and exuberant spiritual feelings. And to this day, whenever I turn to those words, it rekindles many of those same feelings.

Ask and it shall be given (1976)

You've heard about the Bible story where God tells Solomon to ask for whatever he would, and Solomon asks for an understanding heart. (I Kings 3:5-14) I was sitting in church one Wednesday night and hearing words read from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you ..." (Matt 7:7-11) As I listened, it came to me that those words were at that very moment concretely and practically true for me. It was as if God was asking me, "What do you want? You tell me, and it's yours."

In that moment, I knew that God would give me whatever I asked for – no wondering about it. The big question was, what to ask for? It was an opportunity, like having that genie give you three wishes, but I only got one. I knew I wanted to ask for something

²⁶ *S&H*, p. 150:10-17

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that wouldn't become obsolete, that would be timeless, always renewing itself, that would last forever. I knew that everything real and permanent that we have is a manifestation of spiritual substance, so any real good I could want for myself or for mankind (peace on earth, healing of disease, no more wars, relieving human suffering, etc.) would come from increased realization of spiritual reality. This is what I asked for – I said, “I want to be at the standpoint of revelation all the time.”

I was aware that such a request would eventually lead to everything else. As the years have gone by, I have observed a few things about this. I feel that, in a way, my prayer has been answered, although admittedly in what sometimes appears to be in slow-motion, and on occasion even excruciatingly slow, although I'm trying to learn to savor each moment.

I have thought about how true *being* really is unfoldment²⁷ and have gradually realized that because God is infinite, our experiencing of God is always a discovery, it is always a revelation, and that revelation never stops. Because infinity is boundless, we can explore it forever. God's Love and Truth and Life and Spirit and Soul, and the miracle of divine self-existence, are a forever wonder.

The infinite nature of God reveals the dynamic nature of God. To be at the standpoint of divine revelation is to be, by degrees, at-one with God. When I look back on this, I am so glad God told me to ask for this, because it really is asking to be at-one with God. To be at the standpoint of divine revelation is to be at the

²⁷ CS Journal article, “Being is Unfoldment,” by Mary Sands Lee, January 1941. You can find a transcript or hear me read it at, www.hyperthot.com/161_biu.htm.

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standpoint of the reflection of God all the time. To have God with us.

Forever spiritual discovery, or divine revelation, is the natural state of true consciousness, spiritual consciousness, at-one with God. As MBE writes, "Infinite progression is concrete being, ..." ²⁸

To be spiritually minded is life (1976)

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom 8:6) One night sitting in a Wednesday evening CS testimony meeting, up in the back of the balcony, it dawned on me that those words didn't mean it would happen after I die. It meant right now.

To be spiritually minded now, is to be alive now. In a sense, to be carnally minded now is to be dead now; it is to be among the dead right now. After that, instead of considering being spiritually minded as an exalted goal to aspire to, it was simply the most important thing to do. I realized that to be spiritually minded is to really live, to feel all Life's feelings and know all Life's joys.

In the words of King David, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Psalms 42:1)

Handling confusion (1976)

I believe that my first demonstration using *infinite spiritual thinking* to transform a negative was on a complicated problem at

²⁸ *Miscellaneous Writings (MIS)*, by Mary Baker Eddy, p. 82:20-21, "Infinite progression is concrete being, which finite mortals see and comprehend only as abstract glory."

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my work. After a data-gathering trip to Europe, I had to recommend options for rearranging production machinery at several overseas factories. I was at my desk, in a small, windowless 49th floor office in the Prudential Tower in Boston, in the executive offices of The Gillette Company, where I was on a special assignment away from my regular job at the factory.

It didn't take long for me to conclude that the required quantitative analysis was way over my head. The problem I needed to solve seemed very complicated, and I didn't even know where to start; so I started to pray about it, to clear my head, because it was all so confusing. As I prayed, the thing that came to me was to pray about confusion.

At the time, I'd been practicing Christian Science part-time for a few years, so I was not uncertain about the approach. I probably began praying something like this: God is all, and there is no confusion in God. The divine Mind is not confused, but knows and understands all things clearly, and I possess that knowing and clarity by reflection. There is no evil or error, in fact or in belief, to talk me out of my clear, calm, orderly, harmonious, spiritual knowing – and so forth.

In fact, I was pretty clear about the spiritual truth that there is no confusion in the divine Mind, nor in mine. In going over that approach, however, to handle confusion – that is, to make nothing of it – it didn't seem like I was getting any traction. It seemed like shadow-boxing, to try to get rid of something I already knew was unreal.

A few years before I had recorded on a cassette tape the CS Journal article, "Being is Unfoldment" by Mary Sands Lee (MSL)

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(Jan, 1941) and I'd been listening to it during my daily commutes. In this article, MSL writes, "Unfolding infinity is the whole of being." The article is all about the spiritual idea of infinity, and it had really resonated with me.

In this praying about confusion, my meditations on infinity had apparently inspired an intuitive reluctance to rely on the familiar affirmations and denials. In that moment, such denials seemed almost an affront to infinity, and to its wholeness, which is all inclusive and has no manifest opposite.

As a result of my evolving comfort level with thinking about infinity as a name for God, I was led to reach for a more inclusive frame of mind, that would more aptly honor the wholeness of the spiritual idea of infinity. I began praying along these lines: "Dear infinite Love, be my only sense of confusion." That way, if confusion was nothing to infinite Love, it would be nothing to me. But if it had some meaning for infinite Love, then I would find out about that. I just meditated on that idea for a moment. I looked up confusion in the dictionary, and the origins were shown as: *con (with) + fusion*. Then I listened to this idea: "I am the infinite confusion of infinite Love." What could that possibly mean?

When I lifted my thought to infinite Love with those words, I got a glimmer, a wisp of an infinite spiritual con-fusion. The infinite con-fusion of infinite Love. I sensed that infinite con-fusion was everything coming together in oneness. It was a fusing into one, as if a coming together of angel ideas into a wholeness of one heavenly being. It was an angel convocation into a coherent, singular oneness.

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I understood the sublimity of this divine con-fusion of angels. It was a new way of spiritual thinking, a level of spiritual abstraction that apparently turned a human negative into a divine positive. Confusion had ceased to be negative to me. It was seen, in a wisp of spiritual perception, as an infinite idea of the convergence of angel ideas in oneness. I was delighted and comforted, and all my mental perplexity went away.

Pretty soon I was puttering at my desk, in the afterglow of this spiritual perception, now playing with scissors and cardboard, with no sense of focus or intention, almost in a daydream. After a bit I started to notice that my playing was producing something. I had cut up some pieces of cardstock like piano keys, and had rotated one of them perpendicular to the other. I stapled them together and labeled some of the keys. With barely any conscious effort, I had assembled a device that illustrated how to optimize the deployment of injection molding machines in the company's factories in England, France and Germany.

I made a few finishing touches, and then took the cardboard thing to my boss and explained the options. He followed the logic, then took my cardboard model and tossed it in his briefcase, where he was packing for a trip to Europe, where he was to work with the factory managers and develop an implementation plan.

That was it. Problem solved. In this case, not only was I healed of confusion, but I was able to bring simple clarity to what had seemed to be a confusing problem.

Afterward, I was quite aware that my prayerful consideration of the infinite idea of confusion was a different way of praying about negatives. This experience led me to the eventual idea that *the*

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meaning of every infinite word is good. It ushered in a new way of looking at things, a new level of spiritual thinking, and it showed promise as a reliable approach for handling intractable negatives prayerfully and turning them to healing effect in practice.

To be human (1976)

I had a meeting with my CS teacher, and we talked about my practice and a number of relevant spiritual themes. At the end of our talk, as I was getting up to leave, he said something very interesting. He said, as a bit of advice, which I apparently needed to hear, “Don’t be afraid to be human.”

South America (1976)

Looking out the airplane window, flying over dense tropical forests on the approach to land in a South American city, on a business trip, I got a dark, foreboding sense, as if feeling an occult, primitive, fearful mental atmosphere speaking up to me from the jungle. A few days later, in my hotel room, I began to experience unsettled stomach symptoms that signaled the beginning of a travelers’ distress. As I reached out to God in prayer, it came to me that there is only one Spirit. There are not many spirits, no microscopic or microbial spirits, no evil spirits, just one loving infinite divine Spirit that is all-in-all.

I could see that maladies often associated with poor sanitation were often conjoined with beliefs of many spirits, and that an underlying remedy was to know that there are no mental microbes, but only the divine ideas of one infinite Spirit, God. The symptoms vanished in that moment, and I had no problems with that over my next three weeks’ stay.

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Back at the factory (1977)

After a successful few months working in the corporate headquarters, my special assignments were finished, and I returned to the factory in South Boston. As I walked down the hallway to my work area, the thoughts going through my head were that my important and purposeful work was over, and I was back to a depressing job, going nowhere, with no future prospects. These thoughts persisted as I got to my desk. After a little while listening to this, I woke up to realize, I don't think that way. That's not my thought.

It occurred to me that I was picking up the mental atmosphere of the factory, as if it was the algebraic sum of the thoughts and feelings of hundreds of workers in that factory complex. I began praying about it, to reverse those thoughts, most specifically for myself, to pray my way out of that depressed state of mind. I prayed about this whenever it came to me, and actively declared the counter-facts, the spiritual facts, about my prospects and progress as a spiritual child of God.

As I was climbing a number of flights of stairs, some days later, I felt like I had completed praying about this for myself. Then, decisively, at the final landing, I declared that these spiritual facts were true, too, for everyone else in that factory.

Without any planning on my part, that same day, I had a conversation with my boss that started wheels turning for my departure a few months later, to begin a new and rewarding chapter in my career. Apparently, I had finished my spiritual assignment.

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Cared for, watched over ... (1977)

A woman who I had met briefly in college reached out to me by mail and after some correspondence, she planned a weekend visit to checkout prospects for some summer college classes. I had met with her socially a few months before and found myself quite smitten. I recall telling her that, if we were living in the same city, I would be a basket case.

It was a challenge for me, however, that we had different backgrounds in terms of relationships. I was troubled by the prospect of having her sleep over in my apartment. I was very aware of the moral standards of CS and MBE's concept of making morals for mankind.²⁹ I could feel the spiritual dimensions of that issue, and it wasn't just a matter of following the rules, but wanting to conduct myself in a way that felt squeaky-clean from a spiritual standpoint.

I prayed about it a lot, because I wanted to nurture the relationship and be loving, and didn't want to be simply puritanical about it, while at the same time, I wanted to maintain my sense of mental purity, spirituality and moral standards. Ultimately, not being able to figure out a human path that would honor both our human affections and a commitment to radical spirituality, I just turned it over to God, and prayed, "Dear God, please don't let me make a mistake."

On the evening of her visit, we were lying on the couch in my apartment, and at a particular point I was unsure how to proceed, to do justice both to our strong human affections and to a pure spiritual sense of love. I concluded that what I really wanted to

²⁹ *MIS*, p. 110: 4.

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do was just to love her, and I thought of a line from a hymn, “Cared for, watched over, beloved and protected ...”³⁰ I just looked into her eyes and silently went over those words to myself over and over – “Cared for, watched over, beloved and protected” – awakening in my mind an awareness of God’s loving care for her. After a while I felt myself reflecting God’s love, and a wave of that tender spiritual love washed over me. She felt it too. That transformed the moment.

When it was time to turn in, it made perfect sense to tuck her into my bed and then for me to go downstairs to my neighbor’s apartment and spend the night. There was so much love apparent, that it just came naturally for both of us. She told me later that she continued to think about it with wonder, on the train returning to her home city.

A few months later, after she had come to attend summer school courses in town, our close relationship continued. At one point, we went out to visit my parents and had a lovely day by the ocean. When we returned that evening, back to her dorm room, she wanted me to spend the night. I didn’t feel right about that, and we had a difficult conversation. I continued to try to figure out a way that would be both humanly loving and spiritually right. At length, I told her that I would be happy to spend the night with her, and I would sit in the chair in her room and pray. Not surprisingly, she told me to go home.

A few weeks later, I invited her to attend a CS lecture at the Mother Church on a nice summer evening. The lecture was on

³⁰ *CSH*, p. 278, words taken from an 1875 hymnal, adapted words were attributed to initials P.M., which may have been Peter Maurice.

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the topic of “Love,” and the message that came to me very clearly during that lecture was, “Don’t be afraid to love.”

I mention this story primarily because the whole experience was instrumental to my spiritual progress. It also illustrates how moment by moment efforts to obey God’s direction, even when we can’t comprehend a human solution, can guide each step and lead us along a spiritual and loving path.

Filled with love and joy (1977)

After spending a week’s vacation with my girlfriend, I returned to my home city and she to hers far away. When I walked into my apartment and looked around, my first thought was that someone had stolen half my furniture. It only looked that way, because I had such a strong sense of emptiness in her absence. Later on, the feeling of our separation became so strong, it was like grieving a loss. The memory that sticks in my mind is driving home from work one day shouting out loud in the car, over and over, “My heart is filled with love and joy,” until, at length, I started to feel that it was true.

Spiritual sensations (1977)

One evening I had been reading a CS Herald magazine and ran into a quote from MBE that, “Fear is a belief of sensation in matter.”³¹ It just struck me, if fear is a belief of sensation in matter, then the antidote to fear must be belief in spiritual sensation – in spiritual sense.

³¹ *MIS*, p. 93:18.

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I had been spending lots of time in spiritual meditations, and it just made sense to me that all my best sensations were spiritual. That point of view was transformational when I began to incorporate it into my human activities, knowing that all my sensations are spiritual. This was instrumental in dispelling subtle fears, latent in human thought, not even within the threshold of being recognized. That is to say, I only noticed them when they were gone.

Reversing the controls (1977)

In speaking of achieving the ultimate of CS demonstration, MBE uses the words, “time and immense spiritual growth.” (Unity of Good, 43:10) It has been my experience that to comport oneself to a path towards immense spiritual growth sometimes requires one to proceed contrary to what I would call the religious instinct that is sometimes a manifestation of fear, selfishness or lack of love. When God told Moses to pick up the serpent by the tail, Moses may have considered, but probably didn’t reply, that’s not a smart way to pick up a snake.

When God guides you towards opportunities for spiritual growth, all things being equal, it is best to follow with courage. In the mental realm of the fourth river, sometimes the controls work opposite what one might expect, not unlike how it was thought that controls for airplanes in transition to supersonic flight might work opposite that required at subsonic speeds. Of course, this requires that one has learned to practice spiritual listening and obedience sufficiently to be able to follow God’s leadings with confidence.

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Face down in the rug (1977)

I rented a shared CS practitioners' office in downtown Boston, where I would go every day after work for two hours to give prayerful CS treatments, mostly for world problems. My CS teacher, who was going on some extended travel, referred to me a patient with whom he had been working, who was having fairly serious paralysis and mobility issues. I talked with this patient on Tuesdays and Thursdays but prayed for him every weekday. One Tuesday I gave what I felt was a particularly strong and effective prayerful treatment. The patient called the next day, a Wednesday, not his day to call, to report noticeable improvement in his mobility.

I kept working with him, and at length got to a point, for some reason, of declaring that he was healed, and I wouldn't give this case another treatment. The next day he called to say he wanted to switch to a CS Journal listed practitioner so he could have insurance coverage.

In this work, I felt that I had seen some success, but it was nothing like some earlier experiences I had where a clear perception of spiritual Truth resulted in healing. Soon after that, I was praying to God, down on my knees on the carpet, with my face in my hands, to learn how to be more effective in my prayers. I knew I needed to know more about Love.

As I was praying, what came to me was a vision of the local red-light district, a few blocks away, along with instructions, that to be able to heal as I wanted to, I would have to be able to move among them all and feel nothing but love. As unexpected as this was, I suppose I shouldn't have been too surprised. In the late

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19th Century MBE wrote, “The ability to demonstrate to the extent that Jesus did, will come when the student possesses as much of the divine Spirit as he shared, and utilizes its power to overcome sin.”³²

I won’t elaborate on that theme in this volume, but I’m reminded of Moses being told to pick up the serpent by the tail. This could have been fatal had it not been done in response to God’s command.

Substituting words in the Bible Lesson (1977)

I had been quite taken by some CS papers by Martha Wilcox. For instance, in a paper on “Supply,”³³ she commented on the story of the Prodigal Son, writing that, “The father said to the elder son – that is, the elder son’s own Mind said to him – ‘Son, thou art ever with your own infinite Mind and all that your own infinite Mind is, is you.’”

My CS teacher told us, from time to time, to substitute names for God as we were studying the weekly Bible Lesson; that is, where it said, God, we might think of using divine Mind or infinite Love, etc. One day, I was studying the lesson, “Is the Universe Including Man Evolved by Atomic Force?” Using Martha Wilcox’s phrase construction in my study, this is one of the verses that caught my attention. You may want to try it on.

*My own eternal divine Mind is my refuge, and
underneath are the everlasting arms. (Duet 33:27)*

³² *MIS*, p. 55:5.

³³ Audio of Martha Wilcox address on Supply: youtu.be/zX_1zOX9u2c

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In working with this and similar word constructions, I learned two important guidelines. First, it is imperative to keep clear about the distinction between cause and effect. God is cause and man is effect. Man is not God, and there is no legitimate healing power in the human mind, except as it reflects the divine. Second, make sure that anything you declare for yourself, you are also declaring for all mankind. Perhaps these two points are just a reminder to follow the Two Great Commandments. (Matthew 22:37–40)

Joy of Cooking (1977)

Visiting my girlfriend in another city for a long weekend, we were sitting together in a group house where she was living having a somewhat anguished conversation about the merits of sleeping together at that point in our relationship. On the bedside table was a Bible, and I picked it up absent mindedly and let it fall open on my lap. As she was talking, I began casually reading, and the passages spoke to me in supportive and comforting terms.

It hardly seemed fair to be having divine ideas from the Bible unfolding for my benefit while we talked, so I closed the Bible and grabbed the next book that was on the bedside table, which happened to be *Joy of Cooking*.³⁴ Opening at random, my eyes fell on a paragraph that continued the same thoughts and feelings I had been getting from the Bible. I closed the book and

³⁴ *Joy of Cooking*, by Rombauer and Becker, Bobbs-Merrill, 1973.

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opened it again to another random page, where the message continued.

It almost seemed as if this continuing spiritual unfoldment was going to persist in coming from whatever book I opened. When I got home, I highlighted the two passages in my copy of *Joy of Cooking*, for future reference, and was able to find them again just now. I will leave it to the astute reader to imagine what I might have been seeing in these words.

“The mention of sour cream may bring from the uninitiated a disdainful sniff and a vision of a yellowed mass of decomposed solids swimming on a bluish whey. But the seasoned cook responds to the term with delight, for she sees the culinary possibilities of the smooth semiplastic and rolls her tongue in anticipation of its promise.” (Ibid. p.486)

“This is a delightful way to prepare delicate, quick-cooking, partially cooked or sauced foods. The dish, served in the parchment paper in which it was heated, retains the aromas until ready to be eaten. As the food cooks, some of the unwanted steam it generates evaporates through the paper. Just the same, the paper rises and puffs as heating progresses, putting considerable strain on the folded seam. ... To make a papillote: fold a parchment of appropriate size in half, crosswise. Cut from the folded edge to the open edge, a half heart shape, so that when the paper is opened as shown, the full heart shape materializes. ... In serving, snip about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the paper on the cured edge just next to the fold to reveal the lovely food and release the aroma.” (Ibid. p. 131-132)

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Of course, the point here isn't about the personal issue, pro or con, but how God is always right where we are to guide us when we are yearning to follow Him.

Treasures in heaven (1977)

In reaching to spiritualize many of my human concepts during this time, I worked with Jesus's injunction, "And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."³⁵

Working with this, I felt compelled to pray, call no home on earth your home, for one is your home in heaven; call no job on earth your job, for one is your job in heaven; call no hope on earth your hope, for one is your hope in heaven, and so on. This process of relinquishing and lifting up my human concepts went on intermittently for months, and still pops up from time to time.

Kimball's Notes (1977)

The transition in my spiritual beliefs, from one level to the next, most conspicuously began with my work experience involving the infinite idea of confusion in the summer of 1976. Although the heavy lifting, a few months before in May, probably set the wheels in motion. The transition was essentially completed in December of 1977 when visiting Washington, D.C., where I spent a wintry day exploring the card catalog in the Library of Congress (LoC).

My exciting discovery was finding a pamphlet of Edward A. Kimball's Notes from when he taught the Normal Class (teaching the teachers) for MBE in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

³⁵ Matt 23:9.

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Somewhere in the middle of that text, I had a life changing spiritual realization. It was the crystal-clear spiritual perception that *mortal mind never conceived*. In that moment, I could see, it changed everything

Conclusion of Part Two

As I mentioned in the Preface, my primary interest in this writing was to provide a roadmap and to document the trajectory of my experiences and spiritual progress leading to the end of 1977, and the few years after, when I started to figure out and document what it meant.

Part Three, just ahead, is comprised of experiences from the subsequent decades as I continued to put infinite spiritual thinking into practice. As you may observe, this new level embraces and utilizes all the others, so it may take keen observation, in some instances, to figure out what the differences might be. Some experiences are what one would expect from practicing CS in its original statement, while others might be considered an extension based on the original Principle. Of course, the original Principle of Christian Science is God, and that never changes.

Beyond the specific approach for handling seemingly incorrigible negatives, and the words and phrases one might use in prayerful meditation, there is a difference in mind-set, based on underlying, perhaps even latent or unconscious, assumptions about the nature of the so-called problem of being and the related spiritual origin story.

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Perhaps the underlying question is, in our belief, are we working to vanquish a false supposition or are we participating in the wholeness of an ever-unfolding infinite spiritual dawn?

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Part Three – Exploration

The next level (1978)

When I first encountered the “fourth river” state of mind, it brought a sense of exuberant joy and wonder, as latent fears inherent in human religion faded away. This level of human belief is unencumbered by assumptions about primordial erroneous suppositions that could happen again. In fact, the mental environment seems pleasant enough to make one consider lingering. Alas, like all thinking based in the finite dimension, it is still temporal if not fatally flawed.

I was fortunate to have the high standard of spiritual demonstration as my goal, so I knew this brighter state of human belief was but a higher stepping off point, not a place to stay. I call this occasionally buoyant state of mind *the wilderness of human good*. The challenge is that one’s human sense of things becomes so nearly divine to one’s sensibilities that getting traction in praying to overcome remaining human limitations takes a whole new level of spiritual affirmation. Beholding the dawn of forever spiritual evolution requires a new level of spiritual thinking to continue progress. This requires our fuller embrace of oneness with the infinite idea.

Loving to live (1978)

At this time I was going through a phase of intense spiritual positivity and exulting in being spiritually minded. On a cold winter evening, I was washing my clothes at a laundromat while having dinner with a friend at a nearby Chinese restaurant. At one point in the meal, I left my friend and ran back to the

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laundromat to put my clothes in the dryer. On the way back to the restaurant, I was running across the parking lot of this little strip mall and hit a patch of ice, spun around and fell, landing hard splayed out akimbo on the icy pavement.

My first thought was something I'd learned in CS class, "I love to live, I love all Life's experiences!" Then I looked around to make sure no cars were coming, as I lay still in the dark, on the icy pavement, and then returned to just loving to live. That obviously didn't mean that I loved to fall on the ice, but that because all Life's experiences are entirely spiritual, loving to live would lift me right out of the material picture and keep me embraced in divine Love. This declaration, "I love to live, I love all Life's experiences," made the sharp pain in my ribs subside, and I was able to get up and rejoin my friend at dinner. Whenever the pain began to assert itself, I would just go back to this comforting declaration.

I was aware that this affirmative approach was different from what would be normal in CS, where one would include knowing the spiritually scientific fact that there are no accidents, that we never can fall out of Love's care. But that didn't seem consistent with my spiritually affirmative attitude, so I persisted with just knowing, "I love to live, I love all Life's experiences, because all Life's experiences are entirely spiritual." It felt really good to be working that way, and the other approach seemed oddly out of my new comfort zone.

As the days passed, however, it became apparent that the pain was not going away but rather getting worse. At length I relented and included in my prayers standing up for the spiritual truths that there are no accidents in the divine Mind and therefore none

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in my life experience; I never slipped, I never fell, and I could never fall out of God's care; I was never born into matter, material sensation or suffering; and so forth. The healing relief came quickly and completely.

This was an important experience for me, as it clearly illustrated that, notwithstanding the allness of God, Spirit and the utter nothingness of any opposite, the demonstration of healing prayer is often not complete without taking on directly and denying the claims of the problem, which is common in CS. I learned that, even in this new transcendent view of the supremacy of spiritual goodness, the feel-good path of our spiritual meditations and positive affirmations often isn't the whole answer. At times there is a cross to take up. This is a critical point, and more insights on this will come as we proceed.

Listening for answers (1978)

One wintry Sunday night, I was sitting with a friend on the couch in her apartment marking and studying the next week's CS Bible Lesson on Spirit. I had read each section, and it seemed clear that each had a very distinct theme. This suggested, as I had come to notice in my years studying these lessons, that there might be some phrase or sentence somewhere in the lesson that would indicate an ordering structure.

I combed through all the citations for some time but was unable to find a key to what seemed like an orderly collection of very clear topics. For some reason, it seemed important for me to find this, but I came up short. So, I lifted my thought up in prayer, and reasoned that the divine Mind had led the Bible Lesson committee to organize this lesson, and I was receptive to the

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divine Mind, just as they were, so the divine Mind would reveal it to me.

I then continued quietly reading. Some minutes later I became aware of some words repeating themselves in my head, like when one has a song or jingle that persists until it is recognized. The words were, “and Life is the law of his being.” As that phrase kept quietly repeating itself in my mind, I thought, perhaps there is a reason for this and I should look it up. I went to the *Concordance for S&H* and found it was the last words of a familiar paragraph (page 63:5), that begins, “In Science man is the offspring of Spirit. The beautiful, good, and pure constitute his ancestry ...” Each line in that paragraph correlated to the central idea in each section of that lesson. That paragraph was not anywhere in the lesson, so there was no way I could have found it by looking.

The thrill wasn't so much in finding the solution to my little quest, as much as I valued that clear demonstration. It was the realization and proof that if ever I really needed to know something, anything, in fact, even something impossible to figure out humanly, that I had demonstrated the principle through which I could turn to the divine Mind to reveal whatever I needed to know.

Try the spirits (1978)

In February 1978 I visited Washington, D.C. for job interviews, since I had decided to leave Boston and seek my fortune, as they used to say, in the nation's capital. On my way to an important interview, I walked into the impressive lobby of a downtown office building on the way to interview for a position that seemed

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like it would be a giant leap for me professionally. Standing in that lobby, I had what might be called a premonition. The thought was, “You’ll never get this job, and you’ll never work here.”

I was used to listening to mental messages and responding appropriately, but this one seemed to be merely a manifestation of fear, so I just shook it off. Using a phrase construction I had recently admired from a CS Journal article³⁶ by Paul Seeley, together with one borrowed from Martha Wilcox, I said to myself, “My only job is to think the truth my own divine Mind ever causes me to think.”

I got that job, and it was a wonderful position, and I had some great experiences, and was very successful in it, until I left about a year and a half later to start writing a book. The reason I mention this is that one should, in the words of the Bible, “... try the spirits, to see whether they be of God:” (John 4:1) In practical terms, every message that wafts into our heads is not necessarily from divine Love. Occasionally it is just fear, an inverted echo or pure nonsense.

To keep loving (1978)

My somewhat on and off girlfriend worked at a girls’ school and asked me to help chaperone a dance, which we had done on a previous occasion. She left her dress at my apartment a few days before, since we would be changing and leaving from my place, but the dance got postponed due to a snowstorm.

³⁶ “Our Father’s Demand – Unself Mortality,” by Paul Stark Seeley, CS Journal, June 1975

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A few months later, she called and asked to come by and pick up the dress. The dance had been rescheduled, and she was now planning to attend with an old boyfriend who had come to town for the weekend. I had been very much looking forward to going with her, and this was a painful blow and an intense visceral feeling. After our phone call, my prayer was, "Dear God, Don't let me stop loving."

Some months later, she told me she would be spending the summer in another state with him and his family. As I put down the phone, I was filled with gratitude, because I could tell that my praying in the interim had awakened in me the realization that all my heart's treasures were safe in heaven.

Growth disappeared (1978)

I noticed a small growth appearing on my chest just a few inches below my collar bone. It was soon about the size of the eraser on a new pencil. When I looked at it, it seemed to have some structure, but its aspect seemed otherwise to be specifically, unattractive, useless and stupid. In praying about it, I started with the realization that it wasn't something, it was nothing. It was just an opportunity to displace some claim of spiritual empty space with the spiritual truths it was calling for.

I prayed about spiritual intelligence, usefulness and beauty. I prayed about the spiritual idea of church, which MBE says is, "The structure of Truth and Love ..." ³⁷ In praying to be more intelligently spiritually minded about this, I got to the point where I knew clearly the spiritual substance of the counter-facts of its

³⁷ *S&H*, p. 583:12.

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appearance. I had the spiritual substance in consciousness that displaced its mental aspects and showed clearly their nothingness. Consequently, I *knew* that it was *gone* before it appeared to be.

It was still there on my chest, but I knew that the appearance had nothing to back it up, because spiritually speaking it was gone from the tablet of my mentality. I've never done this before or since, and it is certainly not part of any spiritual *modus operandi* I would recommend, but I pointed it out to a close CS friend and said, "See that? It is gone." And soon after, it was. I don't know whether I shrunk or fell off, but it just disappeared.

No human denomination but infinite (1978-1981)

The spiritual transition I was experiencing resulted in the quiet vanishing of a human sense of religious denomination. From the infinite spiritual standpoint, I no longer felt an exclusive spiritual connection to human religion. As this was going on, I experienced an interesting sensation. I felt myself as if floating untethered in outer space. It was quite palpable. In considering this, I realized the Christian Science church organization had been my spiritual rock. Now I needed to re-establish my sense of my rock by placing my spiritual anchor directly in God, infinite Spirit. That was not hard to do, but it had to be done affirmatively.

I had been teaching Sunday School at a CS branch church in the DC area, and, as my spiritual perspective continued to evolve, I started to have an ethical question: Would a CS parent want me teaching their kid? I prayed about this and got the message that it wasn't my job to worry about it, and I should just trust God.

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A few months later they wanted to make some changes in the assignment of teachers, and I found that I could gracefully take time off from Sunday School teaching. Once I did that, I realized, if I wasn't teaching Sunday School, I didn't need to be a branch church member. I withdrew from that church and then realized I no longer needed to be a member of The Mother Church.

I knew that when the clerk received my withdrawal letter at TMC, she would likely contact my teacher, and I didn't want him to be surprised. On the other hand, I didn't want to tell him before submitting the letter, because I wouldn't want to go against his wishes if he asked me not to. I prayed about this for a while, until the obvious answer occurred to me. I mailed the letter of withdrawal and then called him and told him what I'd done.

I stopped regular church attendance for about fifteen years until I was specifically led to return, albeit as a loyal non-member.

My observation about church membership is that it provided me with an opportunity to learn about unselfed service and to make progress in being healed of criticism. MBE writes, " ... intensely contemplating personality impedes spiritual growth."³⁸ Later on that same page, she continues, "I earnestly advise all Christian Scientists to remove from their observation or study the personal sense of any one, and not to dwell in thought upon their own or others' corporeality, either as good or evil."³⁹ What better place to learn these lessons than church?

³⁸ *MIS*, p. 308:24-25.

³⁹ *MIS*, p 308:32.

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Church organization enables getting things done by working together, while the path to spiritual oneness may sometimes require working it out alone.

From a more spiritual perspective, MBE writes, using a stunning phrase from her favorite poet, Alexander Pope, “As an active portion of *one stupendous whole*, goodness identifies man with universal good.”⁴⁰ In Science, man is defined primarily as the complete universal manifestation of God, reflected infinitely as individual man. Our spiritual identity is both individual and collective. Our spiritual connection to church could be described by a line from the familiar Christian hymn (CSH #264): “We are not divided, all one body we.” For that reason, everyone really has a connection to church – that is, all one body we – and it is for each of us to work out our demonstration of what that means.

Transition writings (1978, 1980 and 1982)

In this Part Two, I’ve endeavored to describe experiences and insights that accompanied and facilitated the transition in my thinking and spiritual *modus operandi* between 1976 and 1977, and to show my evolving state of thought. It took another few years to see how this would be manifested in improved assumptions about the origins of human belief, an approach to prayer that occasionally avails itself of higher levels of spiritual abstraction, consequent revisions to my theological framework, and the practical application of these in working out the problem of being.

Around this time, I wrote two articles to submit to the CS periodicals, in case it was just a matter of putting the ideas out

⁴⁰ MY 165:16-18.

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there. “The Dawn” was rejected twice and was deemed “a rather dry essay.” I’m not sure I disagree with that. I never submitted the other article, “Jets and Rockets.” Nevertheless, I think they fairly indicate, at some level, perhaps prettied-up a bit, my state of thought at the time. These two articles are available on my website at: www.hyperthot.com/16_sg.htm. I also wrote a poem, that was rejected by the CS periodicals, that shows some of the spiritual perspective and state of mind from around that time: www.hyperthot.com/1121a_poe.htm.

Vision of Truth (1978)

When I think of Truth, I often think back to this experience, which was certainly one of the most vivid and complete spiritual insights I’ve had. One morning, as I was walking down the street to catch the bus to work, I was thinking and praying about spiritual Truth. I kept hovering at a point between feeling a strong impulse to declare and assert the presence, power and activity of spiritual truth – the divine and absolute, infinite spiritual fact – and having an equally strong awareness that because spiritual truth is TRUE, I don’t need to be affirming it to make it true.

In trying to ponder this deeply, I was getting just the slightest wisps of insight into an absolute spiritual Truth undergirding everything real. At the end of that day, coming home from work, I was still flipping back and forth between declaring God’s infinite spiritual Truth and consciously not declaring it (based on the awareness that I didn’t need to be declaring it — because it was already true).

When I got home, I sat back in my chair in this same frame of mind, as if hovering between knowing and not-knowing. I was

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soon, perhaps in a daydream or reverie, taken by a spiritual vision. In its entirety, it was somewhat like a beam of light in front of me, starting on the lower left and proceeding to the upper right. It was a little bit like watching a multi-stage rocket, where the appearance, and the accompanying words, evolved from one stage to the next.

It began, unobtrusively, as if a soft, gentle light, a radiance. I could see that it was a source, an active and originating Source. The outcome of this source showed itself to be in the very process of being actively and continuously originated. Then, as if landing on a plateau, it showed itself to be good.

Once recognized as good, it revealed itself to be, not just regular good, but breathtakingly good – hard to describe. Its inherent quality of goodness of origin was so severe, that it virtually bristled with integrity. This integrity evolved into a light stream of laser-like coherence, that showed itself, as if it had a hard, impenetrable exterior shell, like it had battleship armor. This conspicuous unimpregnability showed it would remain permanently and absolutely intact in its original coherent perfection forever no matter what.

And that was it. I don't guess the whole thing took more than half a minute.

I've been thinking about this experience off and on, over the intervening decades, to learn more from it, and to better put it into words. I'm struck by how each aspect of it is really hard to describe. I think the word for that is ineffable – too great or extreme to be expressed in words.

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It is a subtle point, but it occurred to me a few years later, that what I saw was not Truth itself, but in some sense, a manifestation of Truth, an image and likeness of Truth, a child of Truth. It was a visualization of the nature of its invisible source-Principle seen and cognized through the unfolding image of its spiritually visible outcome.

I wonder in what paradigm and in what context is the information in this vision a response to the timeless question – “What is Truth?”

I’ve got a number of other questions: What is the connection between truth and source or origin? How does the idea of severity come into play as a positive quality? How does extreme, original quality of goodness translate into integrity? Where does the laser-like coherence come from? (I had a spiritual insight 15 years later that involved the coherence of infinite goodness, so coherence has my attention.) And maybe the most important question of all is, what’s the story with this protective shell? I sense that is a big deal.

It is also interesting to consider the frame of mind that seemed to have kicked off this whole process, hovering between knowing and not-knowing. If you are curious about this, please watch my YouTube video,⁴¹ “The Wholeness of the Infinite God-Principle,” which is discussed here in the Epilogue.

Often in reviewing this experience, I pick up new ideas about it. So please forgive me for the following repetitions. The fact is that

⁴¹ The video can be found on YouTube.com by the title or at: youtu.be/KsvWROLMfgs.

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meditating on these topics is time well spent, so it is worth reiterating.

To help me organize my thoughts, I've parsed this vision into eight discrete ideas. The basic rhythm of it was like a four-stage rocket, as I said earlier, but each stage seemed to have two parts:

(1) It began as if a soft, holy light, quite evidently acting as the Source, like watching the plume of white heat as the rocket is blasting off the launch pad.

(2) The immediate outcome of this source showed itself to be in a state of being actively originated, almost like watching a baby being born, but more dynamic, like watching an evolving and on-going transformation.

(3) That which was being originated revealed itself to be good (not an adjective but the noun).

(4) It wasn't just regular good; it was breathtakingly good (you may remember the end of the first chapter of Genesis, where "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Well this wasn't just "very good," it was very-very-very good – a deep, stunning, astonishing goodness).

(5) I could see and feel that the quality of this goodness reached back, connected to its origin, and the severity of the quality of its goodness of origin showed it now to be bristling with integrity.

(6) That integrity evolved into a beam of extraordinary, powerful, laser-like coherence.

(7) This laser-like coherence was wrapped in a shell that was inviolable and unassailable. (Did you know that the steel armor plate on the side of a battleship with 16-inch guns is typically 16

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inches thick? That was the sense that I got from this – battleship armor.)

(8) I could see that this armor, this inviolable shell would protect and maintain its original, startling, coherent, perfect goodness forever.

Each of these stages was, in some sense, over-the-top, impossible to really describe in a way that completely does it justice. Each stage was filled with wonder.

Now when I think about Truth as a name for God, my first thoughts are of it as a radiant Source and roiling spiritual origination, its overwhelming very-very-very goodness, the severity of its quality of goodness of origin, how it bristles with integrity, showing forth a laser-like coherence, that evidences its inviolability, and this protective shell maintains its integrity and goodness forever.

Sprung from work (1979)

One day at work in downtown DC, sitting in my cubicle, just past mid-afternoon, but not yet close to quitting time, I felt the strongest urge to just get up and leave. It felt like I was wearing suspenders or in the pocket of a slingshot and ready to be just shot straight out of there. I straightened my desk, put my things away, quickly left the building, and walked across K Street, just as the L2 bus was approaching, which I boarded to head home. I paid my fare and then walked straight to the back of the bus and sat down on a bench seat. The woman sitting next to me turned to me and said, “Are you Jim Chapman?”

She was someone I’d met at the Philadelphia Youth Meeting in 1972, and I’d run into her once at TMC in the intervening years.

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And now she was looking for a CS practitioner. She had recently been through some harrowing experiences and had been institutionalized.

One evening she called and told me she was having hallucinations of a big black spider hanging down in the center of her room. She soon proceeded into a vituperative rant directed at me and, after continuing a tirade for a considerable time, abruptly hung up the phone.

After being angrily berated, these questions came to me, “Is this what I want to be doing? Is this my career aspiration, to put up with this sort of thing? Do I just have to take this? Do I have to keep loving her? Am I willing to unself my love enough to let it shine through this?”

I prayed to address these questions, although I may have, in the abstract, known the ultimate answer from the outset. But I needed to think it through. I needed to decide, to take a stand, to work it out.

After a while I came up with the answer: Yes. This is what I want to be doing. I want to love this individual, no matter what. I want to be the expression of God’s Love, to relinquish any personal sense of hurts or self-centered feelings; to be able to say truly, I don’t want there to be anything more to me than a reflection or transparency for God’s love, shining on this individual. Working through this was a battle. It ended in victory.

Soon after finding a sense of peace about this, the phone rang. She said, “Whatever you’re doing, keep doing it.”

Exploration

As our work together progressed, we mostly talked on the phone, but at some point, after a few months, we decided that meeting in a public place would be helpful, since I didn't have a practitioner's office. We met in an upstairs lobby of a downtown hotel, finding two comfortable chairs in a quiet corner. At one point, she unburdened her darkest secrets of which she was most ashamed. I felt a wave of love and a spontaneous feeling like I just wanted to gather her up in my arms like a little child.

For me, this was a healing moment, and I recognized that loving through the shame and regret and fear was a blessing for both of us. We parted company a short time after, although we were in friendly communication off and on for a number of years. She gave me permission to tell this story if it might be helpful to someone.

Reflection (1970s)

One Sunday morning, while preparing to teach my Sunday School class, I got a call telling me the parent of one of my favorite Sunday School pupils had passed on. I was aware that parent had been prayerfully dealing with a physical problem, but the sudden passing was to me an unbelievable shock. What does the Christian Science Sunday School teacher say to a student whose wonderful parent has just died?

I knew that a lot more than words would be needed to support this student, and I prayed to find the love and spiritual insight to be able to bear witness to the healing efficacy of Christian Science and to be of comfort.

In this, I felt totally inadequate. As I tried to think of something authentic that I could offer to meet this need, it seemed futile.

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Prayerfully struggling with this for some time, I finally put my head in my hands, face down on my desk, almost in despair. I didn't feel even close to being able to express the kind of love I felt was needed.

As I continued reaching out to God, I began to realize the love I was seeking for this student was already coming from God. I began knowing this student's true parent, the divine Mind, infinite Spirit, eternal Soul, could never be taken away, would never be separated from His beloved child, but would always be present in this child's life. I prayed thinking specifically about all the ways that God was mothering and fathering this student – comforting, nurturing, guiding, and protecting – supporting, supplying, sustaining, and strengthening.

Then something happened. I saw this radiant beam of God's love shining on this student, and I felt the warmth of God's love for this individual. It was as if I was holding a mirror up to the sun and reflecting that light and warmth onto this student. It was very distinctly an activity of reflection. And then, this stream of reflected divine Love became my love too, flowing through me. I could feel myself embodying that light and warmth and love of God embracing this individual. I totally felt and knew this student was loved by our Father-Mother God warmly, completely, thoroughly.

As it turned out, this student wasn't in the class that morning, and I guess they may have attended church elsewhere for a while after that. I vaguely recall the next time I saw this student. As I remember, we were just glad to see each other. There was no concern, because I absolutely knew this student was completely and forever fathered and mothered by divine Love. This prayerful

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experience was for me so powerful and vivid that I knew it would have a blessing and healing effect.

Perception of spiritual identity (1980)

I was at a meeting of my CS teacher's association of students, and he was speaking at the podium giving his annual address. It was an overflowing of spiritual ideas, and I was at some point reminding myself that I was not a sponge that could become saturated and full, but just continuing at the standpoint of spiritual unfoldment and revelation.

As I was listening to the address, my mind wandered along a spiritual path, perhaps in a bit of a reverie. I was following a spiritual idea that was unfolding to my thought. It was an idea of infinite Mind and man – the oneness of infinite Mind, of infinity and its idea. It became very distinct in my thought and gradually revealed an individual aspect. The idea unfolding to me began to have a someone-ness to it, as if it was an individual, and then I could tell it was someone I knew. It was like hearing a familiar voice, across a crowded room, but you haven't yet determined who it is. Then I recognize it, I knew who that someone was. It was my teacher.

He always used to ask us to write to him after our times together to tell him, "What meant most to me." After that meeting, I wrote to him and told him of that experience. I had the feeling that when I run into him, perhaps several hundred years from now, that is how I will recognize him. It seemed as if it was a distinctive spiritual signature of his true identity as an idea of God.

Exploration

A year or two after that, I was visiting my parents in Massachusetts, and my mom and I were sitting in church, listening to my dad who was the First Reader. The Bible Lesson was on Spirit and included the sentence from *S&H*, "Tenderness accompanies all the might imparted by Spirit."⁴² As I was listening to the reading, a distinctive idea of the combination of spiritual strength and tenderness unfolded to my thought, and it gradually had a someone-ness to it. It reminded me of someone I knew when I was a little boy, someone who was kneeling down and holding me lovingly and tenderly, feeling strong arms around me. It was my dad.

These are the only two times I've had this type of experience, so far, however, they were both in somewhat similar circumstances. They were each someone I knew and loved, and they were speaking spiritual truths, expressing messages, that apparently resonated with aspects of their own distinctive spiritual identities. Since then I've been aware of recognizing everyone as having a distinctive spiritual identity, and trying to discern and appreciate this in each individual I meet and know. Although in these two cases, there was really no trying involved.

Having nothing to pay (1980)

I quit my job as a management consultant for one of the big accounting firms, with the stated intention of writing a book about business. The following Monday morning, I realized the book was going to be about spiritual discovery. For the next year

⁴² *S&H*, p. 514:18-19.

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I mostly thought about it, researched an unfolding thread of ideas, and jotted down notes.

My plan was to sell my condo, purchased about two years before, and live off the proceeds, so I put the condo up for sale with an ad in the local paper. One day, as I was sitting on the couch looking around my apartment, I had a flood of appreciation and gratitude for it, and it just came to me in a quiet message, “You don’t have to sell it.”

After about nine months, living off my savings, my mortgage was due, and I had insufficient funds. I put on a suit and went to visit my bank. I told them I was between jobs and intended to pay, but I would not be able to pay my mortgage on time. They were appreciative of my visit and very gracious. As I walked home, I thought of Jesus’s parable of the two debtors (Luke 7:42), where he said, “And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”

I realized the spiritual significance of having nothing to pay and its relation to divine forgiveness. Often, we are in situations where we have some thought of working out a solution; we have a plan or confidence in our own abilities. When the human ego realizes that it is completely at God’s mercy, it can encourage a receptive and childlike trust in God’s care. I was aware of being in that situation. My future was completely in God’s hands. (I should probably mention that I got my next paycheck about the time I got the foreclosure notice from my bank, and it all worked out.)

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Being God's day (1983)

One extraordinarily lovely, bright spring Saturday morning, I was about to leave my apartment and go out to walk in the city and enjoy the day. However, that day seemed so overwhelmingly lovely that I was having a hard time figuring out how I could do it justice. I was almost jealous of the bright freshness of that day and could feel that I didn't want to be separated from it.

Sitting in my chair, before heading out, I started praying about God's perfect day and knowing that I could never be separated from it, that God's bright sparkling day and I were at-one. I got to the point in my prayers where I was declaring something like, "I am the infinite brightness of God's day; I am the infinite day of infinite Love," perhaps thinking of God being the speaker and me as the reflection. Although it seemed presumptuous, almost blasphemous, that evolved until I was stepping up to let that bright divine sense of the day be my own sense of my identity and selfhood. I gained a wisp of recognition of my oneness with the lovely light and brightness of God's holy day and gained a sense of peace about it.

After dozing off in the chair for a moment, I found myself standing in the bathroom, looking into the mirror. What caught my attention was a sprig of my hair at my forehead that had turned from brown to gray. As I looked at it in the mirror, the gray turned to white, and it gradually spread over the top of my head, and then all my hair shone bright sparkling white. It spread to my face too, and my whole face was shining out of the mirror, bright sparkling white, with glistening yellow highlights like sunlit snow. Then, abruptly, I had the conscious recognition that the image I was seeing in the mirror could only be coming from the

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one standing in front of the mirror – that sparkling brightness was me. I suddenly awoke with a start, from that dream, and realized I'd never left my chair.

Being church (1985)

Over the years, I had noticed that if I wasn't feeling lonely, I could go out socially and meet people and have a good time. But if I was feeling lonely, it was better to stay home and pray. This one Saturday night I was feeling lonely at home and praying. For some reason, after a while, I was drawn to pray about the spiritual idea of church and to establish a sense of oneness with it.

As I was thinking about myself as actually being church, which MBE defines in part as "the structure of Truth and Love,"⁴³ I could feel it, as if my chest was the church and my ribs were the buttresses of a cathedral. I sensed that God naturally fills his church with angels. That led to the palpable spiritual realization that *infinite Love peoples my soul with angels*. The realization of those words healed me of a gaunt feeling of loneliness that has never returned.

Mind your own business (1985)

One summer while visiting relatives, I was briefly surrounded in a dramatic personal dispute that didn't involve me but was hard to ignore. It just came to me to mind my own business, so I sought refuge in the backyard, adjacent to a cornfield, and paced back and forth trying to clear my head.

⁴³ *S&H*, p. 583:12.

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The thought that kept coming to me was, “Mind your own business.” I was repeating that to myself, over and over, walking back and forth across the yard, when the statement transformed itself. I realized that minding my own business had two parts. First, I had to stop minding others’ business, which was pretty clear. But there was more. I had to start minding my own. But to mind my own business, I had to know what it was. The question occurred to me, “OK, so what’s my business?”

I knew that answer. I wanted to be about my Father’s business, harkening back to the first words recorded of Jesus in the Bible, where he said, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”⁴⁴ Then an unexpected question popped into my mind, “What’s my Father’s business?” That surprised me. I’d never thought about that before. I turned to our heavenly Father and prayed, “Father, what is your business?” As clear as a bell, the word spoke itself in my mind – “Christmas.”

Christmas! In the middle of July! What a surprise that was. I hardly knew what to make of it. It was so clear and simple, and it came with such authority. I couldn’t even think to question it. It was just completely clear that God’s business is Christmas. God is in the Christmas business!

That is quite a thought. But what does that mean? I have considered this, from time to time, ever since, and some of the observations are in three articles on my website starting at: www.hyperthot.com/1122_fb.htm.

Application of this idea appears in a few experiences described later here, that employ the familiar verse, “Glory to God in the

⁴⁴ Luke 2:49.

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highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,”⁴⁵ which I use as a first step and guide to the Christmas business.

Prayer topics (1986)

A relative came to visit for a long weekend but became sick and ended up staying the week with me in my one-bedroom apartment. They were turning to CS for relief but seemed to be struggling to make headway. I tried to share what I thought might be some useful spiritual ideas but didn't seem to be able to help. Our time together was not as harmonious as I would have liked.

After they left, I typed out my thoughts in a letter, and it came to seven pages, double-spaced. I figured I should let that rest for a day and then see what seemed to make sense. The next day, I decided to cut out everything that was self-justification on my part. That cut the length of the letter in half, now down to three and a half pages. The following day I decided to recast the letter, more helpfully, in terms of topics they could pray about. So now it was down to one page. Looking it over, I thought, “OK, why don't I pray about those things?” which I did, and there was nothing more to be said.

This experience and others like it led to my developing a guideline for when I want someone else to pray about something. First, figure out what I want them to do. And second, do it.

⁴⁵ Luke 2:14.

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Decision time (1986)

The first real trial after almost a decade of not going to our family dentist began with carefully considering how practical and wise it was to rely on spiritual means alone to deal with excruciating tooth pain. It seems like teeth exist in a middle ground between the animate and the inanimate, so our beliefs are not so ready to admit that they are subject to the jurisdiction of divine Mind. Nerves on the other hand, seem especially mentally sensitive, which makes our beliefs more ready to admit they are subject to Truth. Teeth also represent an opportunity to spiritualize our sense of substance. From my childhood, when praying about visits to the dentist, we would always turn to that sentence in S&H (468:17) where MBE writes, "Substance is that which is eternal and incapable of discord and decay."

I figured that praying through this issue was part of overcoming mortality, and it was better to start sooner than later. Without going through the drama, I'll say that the key to obtaining complete relief included praying with the infinite idea to handle crucifixion. Interestingly, some months later I was visiting family, and, while sitting in church, that tooth pain started to come back. I said, "I've already handled you," and went back to the infinite idea, and the pain left immediately.

The sons and daughters are equal (1986)

I was reading the Bible, sitting out on a grassy hill, and a phrase drifted into my thought, "the sons and daughters of God." Later that same day, when I was standing in the shower, those same words came to me. I thought, what is that about? I looked it up.

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The line comes from a sentence in *S&H* that ends with the phrase, "... and the highest ideas are the sons and daughters of God."⁴⁶

After considering what information might be embedded in those words, it occurred to me that the message for me was that the sons and daughters of God are equal. I realized that my sister and I had been alternating between me being inferior or superior, as if I was alternately seen as either her little brother and she was my big sister, or I was the man and she was the woman, rather than relating to each other as equals.

When I figured that out, I also noticed that I didn't want to be her equal. I traced this back to the idea that I didn't want to be equal to any human, because that would limit me to being only a human. I wanted my equality to be in heaven, and only in that way to be really equal. Realizing that we were equal in heaven, as the sons and daughters of God, was a very freeing thought and relieved me of feeling I needed to try to solve someone else's problems, which usually doesn't end well.

The power of practice (1986)

I was working on a writing project at home for a year and found that each day after about 6 hours of typing, my brain was mush and I needed to stop and find something else worthwhile to do with the remaining hours of the day. There was nothing worth watching on TV, and after trying out a few unpromising pastimes, I bought an electronic keyboard and started practicing, which I'd not done since a failed attempt while in grade school. Instead of playing beginners' pieces, however, I started playing classical

⁴⁶ *S&H*, 503:3.

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music that seemed to be playable, even if they came out in slow motion.

I knew that people who are successful playing music usually practice a lot, as in, many hours a day. So I worked up until I was practicing three hours a day. I got so I could play a few lovely pieces by Beethoven and Chopin reasonably well.

There was one piece, slightly more challenging, by Haydn, that I decided to take on. In one particular place, there was a run of notes for the right hand that needed to be played quite rapidly. I started just playing one note at a time, dum dum dum, dum dum dum, dum. I practiced this run of notes over and over, day after day, always the same, never any faster, just plodding along - dum dum dum, dum dum dum, dum. After persisting with practicing this piece for a number of weeks, one day, all of a sudden, with no extra effort on my part, I put my right hand on the piano, and when I came to that passage, my right hand just went, bumbledy bumbledy bip! It was magic!

I actually raised up my right hand and just stared at it in wonder. Apparently, the continued and persistent practicing had embedded those notes in my subconscious and muscle memory, so my hand just played the notes, and quickly, with almost no specific conscious effort on my part.

I had experienced *the power of practice*. Soon after that, I was standing in the shower, thinking about upping my practice time to four hours, and this question posed itself in my mind. “What are you trying to get good at?”

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Instead of practicing the piano that day, I sat on the couch and thought about spiritual joy for an hour. The piano playing had taught its lesson.

Maybe that's why they call it "the practice."

Handling uncleanness (1987)

My mom had been experiencing phases of dementia, and one challenge was that she would not wash or change her clothes. It got so my dad couldn't take her out socially, to church, for visits, or to restaurants. I prayed about this and then wrote the following letter to my dad, which is in the form of a CS treatment.

My letter is dated February 8, 1987, and his reply follows.

Dear Dad,

[My sister] and I had a nice talk today, and I think we may have stumbled on something worthwhile. Let me begin with some background. Reading Leviticus and Numbers recently, I kept wondering, what is all this stuff trying to say? Why all this belaboring what is clean and unclean? It struck me that the message is that clean and unclean are important, if not fundamental, spiritual issues.

This idea came up again recently when I was praying to handle a belief of sin, and to know that sin can neither impose itself upon nor enter into man's consciousness. It came to me to handle "uncleanness" specifically – not just to declare for perfect sinless man, but to take a stand to cast out the specific claim of spiritual uncleanness.

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Today, on the phone with [my sister], we were talking about the challenges you and Mom have been facing with washing and cleanliness. This particular claim, resistance to being washed, is so distinct that clearly something is getting uncovered here, something is trying to get our attention. It now seems obvious that what needs to be handled is simply the false belief of uncleanness. Something will not let us wash the body – until we see that it is not the body that needs washing, it is our concept of man.⁴⁷ As we know, error's nature is primarily to hide or be disguised, to lie to avoid detection, and to be more subtle than any beast of the field. Yet, at the same time, it cries out, "What have I to do with thee? Art thou come to destroy me?"⁴⁸ And the answer is: "Yes!"

Now this error has been flushed out and brought to light. And even now its nothingness is becoming spontaneously apparent in the light of unfolding Truth. Since Truth has uncovered this error, it is already two-thirds destroyed [as MBE writes⁴⁹]. And as we hold to the Truth of perfect sinless divine Principle and its pure holy expression – man, the same Truth that has brought the falsity of uncleanness to light will completely and naturally dispel it (Ref: "Being is Unfoldment" by M. S. Lee).⁵⁰ Uncleanness, spiritual or physical, as a claim, is even now vanishing into its native nothingness. God is unfolding to us, through the pure light of God's perfect holy love, man's pure, clean, sinless, holy identity as Love's own likeness.

"And starting fresh, as from a second birth,

⁴⁷ CS uses the word "man" as a generic, embracing male and female.

⁴⁸ Luke 34:4 "Art thou come to destroy us?"

⁴⁹ "... error, when found out, is two thirds destroyed ..." MIS: 210:4.

⁵⁰ "Being is Unfoldment," by Mary Sands Lee, CS Journal, Jan 1941

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*Man in the sunshine of the world's new spring,
Shall walk transparent like some holy thing.*⁵¹

These truths are a natural unfoldment of man's purity and spiritual cleanliness in God's image. You remember in November we were handling the issue of clothes, and kept being reminded, that "woman (is) clothed with the sun." Now seeing the rest of that quotation (Rev 12:1), "and the moon under her feet, " we can see that the woman of God's creating is not only pure – clothed with the sun – but that she has the moon (monthly periods, uncleanness) under her feet – under her dominion. This is a fact of being, and we know it.

I think it is clear that the work being done on this situation is working. I think we are in a position to "during the battle the victory claim" and to continue rejoicing, not that the devils are subject unto us but indeed that our names are all written in heaven.

Love to you both,

Jimmy

Here is the letter I received from my dad dated February 15th.

Dear Jimmy:

I have just gone over your metaphysical treatment of "uncleanness" for the umpteenth time. Your letter of Feb 8 was received Tuesday Feb 10. Thursday night, Feb 12, Mom suddenly said – "my hair feels greasy, I want to wash it." We got her clothes off and her into the shower where she washed body and hair. I quick – grabbed her clothes and ran them through the

⁵¹ MIS, p. 51:26

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washer. She put on a clean nightgown, clean underclothes – clean socks and had a nice sleep.

For a month she had not had clothes or boots off. Slept in her blue suit with boots on. Reacted violently at any suggestion that a change was needed. I had avoided any social contact such as church or visits because the odor of body and cheap perfume was so offensive I could hardly stand it. So you see – how much I appreciate your help. Now I am holding to the truths you so clearly set forth – so this break-thru will continue.

We were going to church this morning but could not decide what to wear so – I am writing this instead – will go into TMC tonight. It's less personal.

Otherwise – we keep going forward.

Thanks for your letter.

Love, Dad

Cleanse thou me from secret faults (1988)

After two years off, working on my book, I went back to my previous employer. I had great confidence from recent spiritual experiences, one of which involved attaining prayerful mastery over beliefs of “madness” (a mix of crazy and angry), although I don't remember the specifics. As I became acclimated to my new position at work, I sensed they had become somewhat cowed by an angry person in their ranks. I was not impressed by this and was able to move this person out of a planned supervisory position, with a balance of honesty and goodwill.

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I may have become a bit impressed with myself, at that point, exulting in being decisive, and I began giving my boss a hard time, feeling that he needed to make decisions about certain budget and staffing issues affecting my group. Shortly after that, there was a re-organization, and he moved someone over me who had been a somewhat junior manager. I told him I was OK with that, but I knew I needed to pray about it, because something about it really bothered me. I prayed to love and forgive everyone involved, and I prayed about anything else I could think of, but it didn't clear my mind.

Lying in bed that night, I reached out to God, using a Bible verse my CS teacher had recommended as a frequent prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."⁵² I prayed those words to God, and immediately the word "vanity" came clearly into mind. That was it, my vanity was hurt. I prayed about that for a few minutes, got a sense of peace about it, fell asleep, and that was the end of that.

D'Orsay museum (1991)

We were in Paris, at the d'Orsay museum, and my companion must have been in a very bad mood. To start with, she didn't like any of the Impressionist paintings. She seemed to be critical of everything. I tried to talk with her, but to no avail. Then I was silently complaining to myself, saying, "She's just being this, and so that, and she's being such a this and such a that."

⁵² Psalms 19:12

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Into the midst of my silent complaining, I heard a loud, clear, authoritative voice speaking itself slowly in my mind, "It's not what she is, it's what I AM."

That has been one of the most useful lessons I've ever had. Whenever I'm complaining to myself about what he or she is doing or not doing, or what they are doing or not doing, or what some group is doing or not doing, or what the government is doing or not doing, etc., I remind myself what is important. The essential thing is to think about what I AM – what the "I am" is, what God is, what God is doing, and by reflection, what that means I am. In our thinking, the answer is always and foremost: It's all about God. And our reflection of that I am. Nothing else really matters. Nothing else is really true.

Cat care (1991)

My girlfriend adopted a cat from a local shelter to companion her other cat, but they were not getting along, and she said she would have to find this cat a new home. I volunteered to take the new cat, which she agreed to, but only with the condition that if the cat ever got sick, I would take her to the vet.

Some months later, I came into my apartment and saw my cat looking up at me with one eye swollen shut. I knew that meant I would have to take her to the vet. I was down on my knees on the carpet praying and knowing there was nothing to fear in taking this cat to the vet. When I got a sense of peace about that, I got up and took a few steps, but then realized I didn't want to have a picture of a sick cat in my thought.

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I was back on my knees, and first prayed about how this cat could only have a perfect “eye” of God’s creating. Soon that turned into there being only one perfect “I,” which I knew was God.

With the false picture cleared from my thought, I went about my business, intending to take the cat to the vet the next day. The next morning the cat’s eye was back to normal, so she missed out on a trip to the vet.

No need to look for error (1993)

I had been praying about something and don’t now remember what it was, however, I do remember that I had been wondering how I might discover what might have been a hidden, seemingly illusive, error that needed to be handled. Although I was already aware of this as a principle in prayer, in a moment of clarity, while momentarily stopped in the car at a red light, I had a spiritual realization and assurance that I never need to look for error.

Truth uncovers error naturally, and all I ever need to do is know the truth, and that will uncover anything that needs to be uncovered. That conviction has stayed with me and saved a lot of anguish, knowing that I never need to go looking for error, and even more, that error can never hide from Truth, which naturally uncovers and dispels it.

Using the idea that “*the meaning of every infinite word is good,*” falls into a similar category. Occasionally, when I tell someone this, they try to test it out by imagining the most outlandish example. That is much like the lesson from the poison ivy story (in the 1950s) – don’t go looking for error to show your power over it.

Exploration

On the other hand, when you are praying, and not getting any traction trying to deny and realize the nothingness of some error, represented by a word that has risen to your attention, you can use the construction, “the infinite (insert) of infinite Love,” and take it to God until you get a wisp of a meaning that is good. Conjuring up some infinite negative, that has not been brought to light by knowing the truth, may not be accessible or useful.

Treacherous (1993)

After enjoying the sun in the park with my girlfriend, I was walking down a dirt path to a nearby creek, when I slipped, tumbled face-first down an incline, and struck my head on a rock, where it bounced like a falling coconut. We went back to my place, and she put a butterfly bandage on the deep cut above my eye. The only thing I remember praying about was severity, which was a word dear to my heart (see 1978 story about vision of Truth). No doubt I had a concussion, which took a while to subside.

The next day we went back to the spot, and I took another look at the path and saw it was comprised of wet, slippery earth and damp tree roots heading downhill. The word that came to me was “treacherous.” I went home and looked it up, and the relevant definition was, something that looks safe but isn’t.

A few days later, I was thinking about some conversations I had been having in an Internet chat room, and the word that popped into my mind was *treacherous*. I said to myself, “Aha, so that is something that looks safe but isn’t.” Right then, I knew I wouldn’t be doing that again.

Exploration

In relating this story, it reminds me of that joke about the guy with the obedient mule, where after he hits the mule with a two-by-four, the punch line is, “Yes, he will obey me, but I have to get his attention first.”

My book (1994)

I left my consulting job at one of the big accounting firms in December 1979 to begin working on a book, that turned out to be about spiritual discovery, eventually entitled, *The Knowledge of Good and Evil*. As it turned out, that year was mostly devoted to thinking, research and writing background notes, after which I went broke and went back to work.

I say, “went broke,” but I still owned a one-bedroom condo, for which I had a foreclosure notice from the bank. There was a day, after a while surviving on bread, peanut butter, potatoes and pasta, when I went to the grocery store craving meat, with my last dollar bill, and weighed the relative merits of buying a can of cat food versus Vienna sausage, which ultimately won out. Around that time I figured maybe I should get a job.

By June of 1982, after much thought, I had still not written a word of the book, but one Sunday afternoon I sat down and outlined twelve chapters. About six weeks later, writing nights and weekends, I had a first draft that I circulated to a few colleagues and a friendly editor for comments. I quit work again in 1986 and worked on the book for two years, going broke again.

Six years later, in 1994, I quit my job a third time with the determination to finish the book, even though I didn’t feel like I knew how the story ended. I’m still thinking about this and hope someday to be able to write the real conclusion.

Exploration

Incidentally, this is the 25th anniversary of the following ad appearing Christmas Day in the New York Times, Book Review. You may recognize the human figures as those on the plaque carried on the Pioneer spacecrafts 10 and 11. The figures were drawn by Linda Salzman (Sagan), who is an artist and was Carl Sagan's wife at the time. I called Carl Sagan's office at Cornell and was given permission to use these figures. The figures hint at topics in the book that address the metaphysics of the Adam and Eve allegory along with gender and oneness.

The New York Times

Book Review

December 25, 1994

Spiritual Discovery for the 21st Century
THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL
By Jim Chapman

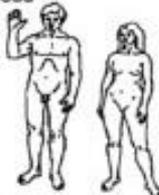
*"The problem of good and evil is solved
as they are infinite and one fits in the other -
so the meaning of every infinite word is good."*

Do you want to understand?

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- Patterns of belief that form into the world's religions
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- The source and nature of individual identity
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Book ad in the New York Times, Christmas, 1994

A few months after publishing the book, I was wondering how it would be received, when a voice in my head spoke to me saying,

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“It’s not what they’re going to do, it’s what I’m going to do.” I haven’t worried about it since.

Infinite Love present (1995)

One of my favorite healing experiences is so simple and illustrative. Many years after I stopped visiting our family dentist, I had a perfectly excruciating toothache, and was sitting back in my recliner praying about it. I just started to declare silently to myself the presence of infinite Love. I was just knowing it to myself over and over, “Infinite Love,” and just letting it sink in. After persisting in this for some time, I felt a very quiet, but deep down inside assurance that infinite Love itself was present, right where I was.

Right on the heels of that sense of the presence of infinite Love, I watched some spiritual logic play out in my mind. It seemed obvious that, with infinite Love present, there just couldn’t possibly be a toothache. I wasn’t consciously or actively denying the toothache, but it became obvious that having a toothache in the presence of infinite Love was impossible.

The recognition of the presence of infinite Love enforced its own supremacy, its own allness. Even though I could still feel the tooth pain, I was completely mentally relieved. With that, my sense of having that problem vanished from my thought. There was no longer any mental aspect of a problem, and the symptoms quickly faded away.

I’m very interested in this process, where the sense of God’s truth is so clear that it naturally and spontaneously makes it obvious that having a problem is just impossible. This type of spiritual realization results in healing.

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A spiritual adventure (1995)

While I was driving on the interstate with the top down, a tiny stone flew into my eye, and soon after, my eye was watering and sensitive. After a few days, seeing any light in that eye became so uncomfortable that I darkened my apartment, closed the blinds and kept the eye covered. Some friends and I had been planning a trip to the beach on the weekend, and it seemed increasingly unlikely that I would be able to go. Waking up early the morning of our planned departure, I was still uncomfortable in the light, but it was decision time.

As I was shaving, I considered the options: I could let my friends go without me, and stay comfortably and quietly in my darkened, air-conditioned apartment. Or I could go to the beach, with the blinding bright sunshine sparkling on the ocean, having to pray all the way, and making the trip a spiritual adventure.

Well that pretty much made the decision for me, and after a few hours on the highway, where I was a passenger, my eye was significantly better. By the time we got to the beach I was completely free. There was some sort of celebration going on. They had a live band, and by early afternoon, on the beach, we were dancing in the sunshine.

Kitten workup (1995)

I came into possession of a tiny kitten which a friend and I found in the middle of a busy street. This kitten expressed a clear embodiment of sweet sincerity. She was a little angel. I was, however, sensitive to subtle fears for her, and I knew I needed to pray about it. Some friends suggested I take her to the vet to have what they called a blood workup and other tests. I decided

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to do a prayerful spiritual truth workup on her, and with some seriousness of intention I went to a local CS Reading Room for the express purpose of taking quiet time to pray for this kitten.

I started praying for her at the tip of her tail and worked my way up through her sweet little body, knowing the truth about the proper condition and functioning of everything, as her perfect reflection of divine Life, Truth and Love. At one point, I felt a need to pray a little more earnestly and specifically to handle thoughts that came to me. And then we were done, the fears were dispelled, and she was fine.

The infinite idea of race (1995)

I was working in an office building near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. in the fall of 1995, when the Million Man March was held. A few of us walked out to the Mall during lunch to see what was happening. While I was there, in the crowd, a thought went through my mind that did not pass muster.

Later, when back home, I felt the need to pray about it. I had learned in CS primary class, that there is only one race. But thinking of that one race as the human race did not seem to be the final healing truth.

Applying the idea that the meaning of every infinite word is good, I ended up thinking about the infinite idea of racism. I know that sounds really strange, but please bear with me. What would it mean to be the infinite racism of infinite Love? I tried that on: "I am the infinite racism of infinite Love." It struck me that there are two sides to that. First, it favors the group that is the children or ideas of infinite Love; and second, it excludes and dismisses all

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else. So the children of God are the only race, and that's all of us.

I saw that those two sides went right to the basic nature of infinite Love, in the pattern of, "I am God and there is none else."⁵³ I asked my girlfriend to think about the infinite racism of infinite Love, and she came up with the same thing. Today I would probably say, spiritual man, as the infinite idea of infinite Love, is the only race.

Later that day, we were sitting in a restaurant, and when the waiter, with a much darker complexion, came to take our order, as I looked at him a voice deep inside me said, "We are the same race." It was completely spontaneous, and such a pleasant surprise, to have that spiritual recognition just come up from deep inside.

A few days later, a woman whom I'd been corresponding with about my book came to the area, and we met at her hotel near the airport to talk. I was excited about this recent experience and explained it to her. But I didn't just recall it from memory, I went through the thought process all over again, explaining it as I went.

I don't recall any particular reaction from either of us at the time, but later, as I was driving home, I had an expansive sense and palpable awareness of the allness of spiritual goodness. It persisted for about a day. I remember being out on the Potomac River the next day rowing, and having a strong sense, not only of the allness of goodness, but a striking sense of its coherence –

⁵³ Isaiah 46:9.

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like an invisible laser-light of spiritual goodness spread across the sky.

Tenderness (1996)

One time my jaw became quite swollen, I had chipmunk cheeks on my right side, and serious discomfort. As I was praying about it, I realized my mouth had become just too tender to chew food, so I started praying about tenderness.

At the level of infinite thinking, I realized the problem wasn't having too much of something – tenderness – but perhaps not enough, a human sense rather than an infinite spiritual sense of tenderness. I realized that, in the realm of the infinite, I couldn't be too tender, but rather not nearly tender enough. I prayed something like this: "Please God, let me not be humanly tender, but infinitely tender. God be my only sense of tenderness; let your infinite tenderness be my only tenderness. Let infinite Love's tenderness be my only sense of tenderness. I am the infinite tenderness of infinite Love." And that sort of thing.

I remembered from reading *Prose Works*, by MBE, just the day before, where she wrote, "The little that I have accomplished has all been done through love, – self-forgetful, patient, unfaltering tenderness." (MY 247:28) I had marveled at that sentence. To think with all her accomplishments, she summed up what had really made the difference, and it was tenderness.

This next sentence was about ten pages later: "To the awakened consciousness, the Bethlehem babe has left his swaddling-clothes (material environments) for the form and comeliness of the divine ideal, which has passed from a corporeal to the spiritual

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sense of Christ and is winning the heart of humanity with ineffable tenderness.” (MY 357:6)

I realized that I could never, ever, be too tender. Instead, I just basked in the idea of being able to reflect that unspeakable tenderness of infinite Love. I couldn't have a problem anymore when I felt that good about it. And so it was.

God on the rocks (1996)

One day I was daydreaming about what would be my ideal vacation. After I sketched it out in my mind, the thought came to me, “OK, now you have to do it.” A few days later, at the beginning of a Labor Day weekend, I packed up my stuff and was in the car heading for a mountain range in New Hampshire.

Unbeknownst to me, I was so focused on settling down for the long drive that I completely missed the first highway exit, less than 15 miles from my home. I didn't even notice until, about 30 miles out of my way, I crossed a bridge into another state, well south of where I was heading. After turning around, I wondered repeatedly how I could have been so oblivious to the turn, and for the next few hours alternately berated myself and prayed about paying attention.

After a few intermediate stops, I got to New Hampshire, parked my Jeep, and headed up the trail into the Presidential mountain range. I spent the night near the tree line, at Crag Camp, where my dad had bunked on a similar hike in 1938, and set out in the morning in the direction of Mt. Washington, carrying my 50-pound pack, with four mountain peaks to go before nightfall.

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As I was walking along a rocky ridge, which seemed like an endless pile of giant, jagged, jumbled boulders, I became very aware that I was all alone and that if I should slip and fall on the boulders it could be a big problem.

It occurred to me that I needed to be paying attention to the placement of every single footstep. I realized that my earlier experience on the drive up had prepared me to be very conscious of paying attention. In this instance, I decided the thing I really needed to be paying attention to was God. And the question came, where is God? The answer was, right here where I am, on the rocks. So after that, I've always known it is important to pay attention to God, not always sailing around up in the sky, but sometimes right where I am – God on the rocks.

A few decades later, I was hosting a pool party that included a number of little kids. I've learned that having little kids in a swimming pool requires constant vigilance. As I was watching them, and thinking about paying attention, it struck me that I needed to be paying attention to God, and right where they were. Those little kids became God on the rocks.

Just a misfit (1997)

After I'd completed my third time off work, and finished my book, I had one project scheduling gig for a few months, and then was ready to find something new. After talking with a recruiter about available openings, I got the strong feeling that there were lots of jobs I could get, that I wasn't interested in, and lots of jobs I wanted, where they weren't interested in me. The idea that occurred to me was, I just don't fit into the job market. I am just a misfit.

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At this point, you will probably not be surprised to hear that I started praying, “I am the infinite misfit of infinite Love,” and thinking about what it would mean for infinite Love to be a misfit. It occurred to me that infinite Love doesn’t fit into the human scene, it is way bigger – infinite Love transforms the human scene. As I was out for a morning run thinking about this, the question came to me, “When an elephant sits in a lawn chair, what changes?”

I got the idea that as a reflection of infinite Love, my job was not to fit in, but to transform. With that new perspective, I was content.

That afternoon, I got a call to come for an interview for a position that was in my interest area. After the interview, they said, “Can you start tomorrow?”

After about a week working in what was a fairly chaotic environment, I was driving into work thinking about it, and with all the craziness that was going on in that office, I thought, I just don’t fit in there. Immediately, I said to myself, “Of course I don’t fit in, my job isn’t to fit in that work environment, my job is to transform it.”

Sometime later, the hiring managers told me that they had been trying for months to get their customer to approve the position for a project manager, and the customer never would agree to it. The day they called me, they just decided they would go ahead and do it anyway.

In that position I guided the completion of a significant project for the organization. They gave me a letter of appreciation for

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helping them transform the way they managed project requirements.

Not bow down nor serve them (1997)

There was a woman where I was working, on my next consulting assignment, who was interested in spiritual things, and we had begun chatting about our backgrounds. Her mother had some past association with Christian Science, and this woman had been a Hare Krishna and had lived in a commune in the mountains not too far away. At one point, she invited me to join her and her husband for dinner in their home. I went there and while she was preparing dinner, she invited me to join in their religious practice, which involved preparing a small plate of food and taking it into a room where they had an altar and candles, and they set the plate of food on the altar with their religious icons and said prayers.

As I mentioned earlier, my spiritual perspective became somewhat non-denominational back in the late 1970s, so now I was feeling very ecumenical and accepting, and I graciously went along with this. However, as I knelt down to pray with them, in this room in front of the idols and candles, I heard a stentorian voice in my head, speaking plainly, “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.”

I realized that we were literally “bowing down to and serving idols.” It became very clear to me in that moment, that notwithstanding the value of courtesies and politeness, I would never ever do that again.

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The un-principle (1998)

I was working as a consultant at a company where they seemed to have a fairly high level of dysfunction. While I was there, two of the managers I reported to were summarily fired. I got the idea that the company was being managed primarily by watching what their competitors were doing, rather than by focusing on running their own business on sound business principles.

After thinking about it for some time, it occurred to me that the thing that was bothering me was not that they were dishonest or incompetent, which they weren't. It wasn't that they had bad principles as much as they didn't seem to have any – the management style was just not principled. I prayed about that using, of course, the phrase, "I am the infinite unprinciple of infinite Love," although I had no idea at all what that could possibly mean.

I mention this unusual usage because it is one that I first learned in this experience, but have used since, even recently, in many different ways, but this was the discovery, the first time. It was a stretch, as you will see.

It occurred to me that in the realm of the spiritual and infinite, an "un-principle" is a principle that will "un" something. The infinite unprinciple of infinite Love will affirmatively "un" everything unlike infinite Love. It is the opposite of creating something; it actively causes something not to be created or undoes it.

Praying with that particular usage provided a sense of peace for me in that environment; I saw it as a spiritual force to undo anything unlike God. Since then, it has come in handy every time

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I've run into situations that appeared to be humanly unprincipled or, really, un-anything.

Fluffy cat (1998)

One morning, I noticed that my sweet kitty had a dry hard spot on her forehead about the size of a dime. In praying about it, what came to me was the explanation Jesus gave to his disciples when he said, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God may be made manifest."⁵⁴

I thought about what needed to be made manifest, and the thought was "soft and fluffy." Then the question came, "Where are the works of God made manifest?" And the answer was, of course, in consciousness, that is, in my thought. I knew I could do that. Accordingly, I thought about being more soft and fluffy, and thinking of that in terms of my dealings with others. The next time I looked at my kitty, she was back to her original, perfectly soft and fluffy self.

No problem (2000)

On my next project, I had a daily commute 45-minute each way to another city. After some months, on the drive to work, I started losing track of where I was, and not remembering having turned onto the highway. In my office, I was sometimes forgetting the recent past and not aware of what was going on. At first these occurrences were disconcerting and, as time went on, they became increasingly disturbing.

⁵⁴ John 9:3.

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It came to a head one day when someone came into my office, and I didn't remember how I got there – my short-term memory was blank. The thought that came to me was, were this to persist, my life as I know it would be over. I wouldn't be able to work for a living or have any sort of independent human life.

On the other hand, I had been meditating on spiritual ideas for some decades, and I knew that to be spiritually minded is to really live, to feel all Life's feelings and know all Life's joys. I knew that my life wasn't really dependent on my memory or on any circumstances of the human condition. Accordingly, I said to myself, "No problem, I'll just be spiritually minded. I know how to do that."

That was the end of that problem.

Listen and follow (2000)

I was sitting at the kitchen table one evening, talking with a friend about how to hear God's voice. I mentioned that it was pretty simple: just listen and obey. She was disappointed that obeying was tied to the hearing part, as if one could listen to God, like having one of those police scanner radios, where you could just tune in and then figure out if you wanted to respond.

I pointed out that our responding to what we hear is what enables us to hear the next time. In fact, I recalled one time where I had a clear thought about something I was supposed to do but had not yet acted on it. After about six months, I realized it was an outstanding spiritual obligation, so I took the action, which was unspectacular, but I learned a lot and it opened up my spiritual path for the next steps.

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After speaking about this process with my friend, the very next morning I was heading out the door to drive to another city to meet with a colleague. I was in a bit of a hurry, but as I was heading for the car, the thought came to me to check my voicemail at work. I knew this was unusual, because I never got messages on that line and, consequently, never checked that voicemail. In that moment I said to myself, “This is a good example of what we were talking about.” It was a clear thought I never would have come up with on my own. It would have been easy to ignore it or to talk myself out of it.

I took the few extra minutes before my departure and checked my voicemail, and sure enough there was nothing there. But while I was delayed from leaving, checking voicemail, I got a call from a colleague a few states away who had known of my travel plans. He told me that the fellow I was planning to meet was not in his office but was working from home. Accordingly, I changed my route and was able to have a productive meeting with him in his living room.

In this instance, it is interesting that the voicemail gambit had the effect of delaying my departure until the call came. I point this out, because that is not an unusual pattern. On occasion, I’ve talked myself out of following an intuition that seemed illogical but found out later it would have positioned me for something else, of which I was completely unaware. Now I try to always err on the side of following intuitions, and not being talked out of them, even if it’s only for practice.

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Now (2000)

I'm working with a few scant notes here, without a clear recollection. Apparently, one significant idea in praying about a painful tooth was working with, "I am the infinite now of infinite Love." This may have been to address a belief of delay. In the realm of the spiritual dawn, one's desired result is always inevitable – it's just a matter of timing.

The part I remember clearly is being out walking and praying around two o'clock in the morning, because the pain was so severe, I couldn't sleep or sit still. I was walking by an all-night pharmacy in the neighborhood, and the thought came to me that I could probably just go into that pharmacy and buy some drops to numb the pain.

My response to that thought was, "This isn't about making the pain go away, this is about working out my salvation." It was useful to have that moment of clarity and commitment

After that I recall going home and sleeping in the hammock, in the backyard, but I don't remember exactly when the pain left. I think it had ceased to be that important and was gone by morning.

A challenging project (2000)

The phrase "kindly and truly" appears a number of times in the beginning books of the Bible.⁵⁵ When I first discovered that combination, I thought about how it is really an expression of Love and Truth, which from CS I know to have spiritual power.

⁵⁵ Gen 24:49 and 47:29, Joshua 2:14

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For use in the workplace, I've changed the words to honesty and good-will, which are essentially the same as Truth and Love or truly and kindly.

I had the opportunity to be project manager for a team of 35 programmers and analysts working on a difficult and troubled budget system development project, that I took over, two years into a three-year effort. When we came back from one meeting with an unhappy customer, I told the team, here is our strategy for moving forward, to be as honest and open as we can be, and to work hard and invest good-will and deliver the very best product we can. I knew that Truth and Love would see us through, and the team responded, perhaps sensing that relying on honesty and good-will was a sound and principled approach.

Around that time, I attended a talk on negotiations, and the expert said you need to do three things. First, you need to do your homework. Second, you need to be patient, because the one in a hurry gives up the most. Third, you need to be as gracious as you possibly can, because it costs you nothing. I related this to my management team, because, in a sense, winning customer acceptance of our work product had become somewhat of a negotiation.

One time we were heading to a difficult meeting with the customer. I said, "You know our strategy, right?" My next in command rolled her eyes and said, "Yes, we know, patience and grace, patience and grace."

This was working out well for us, but at one point, something else was needed from the spiritual toolkit.

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I read somewhere about an exorcism, where the presiding priest confronted the devil or evil spirit and asked, “What is your name?” The reply came back, “Spite.” Notwithstanding this murky origin, I believe this anecdote provides some useful information.

To explore this, let’s think about what might be the infinite spite of infinite Love. What I came up with is that infinite Love remains Love, in spite of all. It is infinite Love no matter what. In working with this, it often brings to mind the MBE line, “Entirely separate from the belief and dream of material living, is the Life divine ...”⁵⁶ Not mostly separate, but entirely separate. It means unconditional Love, in spite of all.

When you invoke this infinite spite of infinite Love, you are invoking a most powerful spiritual idea – unconditional divine Love, no matter what. When you identify with that, work with it in the first person, you are touching on the power of oneness with infinite Love.

Now getting back in this difficult project, we worked out an agreement with this contentious customer on some clear criteria for system acceptance and final payment. During final acceptance testing, however, when it started to look like we would meet the criteria, the customer backed out of the agreement. As I was praying about it, the sense that I got was that it was just for spite.

To counteract that, the solution was to bring to bear the infinite spite of infinite Love, which neutralizes human spite. I prayed in

⁵⁶ *S&H* 14:25.

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this way briefly, to know there could be no human spite only infinite, the unconditional love of infinite Love, no matter what.

We kept working to deliver the system, with honesty and goodwill. Sometime later, the customer realized they had to sign-off, and they provided full payment. The terms would have been much more favorable for them, in the end, if they had honored our original agreement. Human spite is always a bad choice.

A higher sense of “I” (2001)

I was working in the backyard, clearing some left-over construction materials, pulling a rope out of a pile of plastic netting and wood posts, and the rope was well tangled in the pile. Somewhat in frustration, I gave a huge yank on the rope, and it turns out the rope was stapled to a solid hardwood post, that flew up and smacked me hard on the forehead — not unlike like hitting myself in the head with the handle of a baseball bat.

The thought that instantly came up in my mind, a realization in the painful and dizzying disbelief at what I’d done, was, “I just bonked myself in the head with a stick!” The emphasis was clearly on the “I”, in a sort of bewildering self-condemnation; and immediately I knew that was the wrong I to be identifying with. I knew that I, which was trying to attach itself to me in that moment, was the false I of stupid human egotism. With that awareness, I rejected that I and reached up in thought to a higher I (to the one infinite heavenly I, to be my only I).

Immediately there was a voice, actually audible in my mind, like someone was standing just behind me at my right shoulder. It

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was a firm, strong, tender voice, and slowly and deliberately, it said, “I would NEVER hurt you.”

A wave of that authoritative, compassionate, spiritual assurance washed over me, and that was the end of that. No more pain, no cut, no bruise, nothing. I immediately went back to my work, with only the memory of that strong, clear, loving voice: “I would never hurt you.”

Now what do I do? (2001)

After a few years as an independent consultant, I took a job as an employee with a company in the fall of 1998 to perform a specific mission. Since I preferred a consulting relationship, I said to myself that I would continue with that company for two years, unless they gave me a reason to stay. Accordingly, I left two years and a few days later. In wondering what to do next, it came to me to prepare a presentation on some project management principles I had been thinking about, and that I should arrange to give a talk to the local Washington, D.C., chapter of the Project Management Institute (PMI).

I named my talk, “Principle-Based Project Management,” and as it evolved, the talk had two parts. The first was on ten project management principles and the second was entitled, “The Spiritual Side of Project Management,” which talked about paying attention, discipline, and building relationships by balancing honesty and good-will. I pitched this to my PMI contact, and while there was some interest, there didn’t seem to be any progress towards setting a date for my talk.

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After a few months, it came to me that they were probably having trouble with the word “Spiritual,” so I changed the title of the second section from the “Spiritual Side” to “Project Management Character Principles.” Almost immediately they put me on the schedule for their July 2001 monthly chapter meeting. Other than that new title, I made no other changes to the presentation content.

The talk to a little over 100 professionals went well, and afterward a few people came up to me with compliments, and one gave me his business card. He was not working in an area that was attractive to me, but it was the only card I got. I started working with this organization about a month later, and it basically supported me generously for the rest of my professional career.

Praying about terrorism (2001)

In our spiritual work, as in much else in life, the first step is paying attention. *If one is not paying attention, little else matters.*

The next step is faithful, flexible following. The main value in hearing God’s voice is that it enables us to follow his direction. One day I was sitting on my patio, while waiting for some contract work that was a few weeks off, and thinking about what to do with the day. I went to my business model (described on my website, and related to the Christmas business), “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”⁵⁷ I worked through these ideas and then asked myself the question, “How can I express good-will today?”

⁵⁷ Luke 2:14.

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It came to me that I should write up a Web page on praying about terrorism. I had been praying about terrorism for several years, as it had become apparent that this was an error that needed to be addressed. Accordingly, I spent a few hours that afternoon launching a new page on my website. That was the afternoon of September 10, 2001.

I got to pray about that more the next day, and I updated the Web page over the next few days, as I had more food for thought, but the basic ideas were unchanged. On September 11th, I recall handling the claim of “spectacle.”

This is just to say, that in our spiritual warfare, we need to be paying attention – listening for God’s voice – and then we need to respond appropriately.

Loving the sniper (2002)

You may remember that in October 2002, ten people were shot dead and three others seriously wounded in the Washington, D.C. area, apparently selected at random, by what was then called “the Washington sniper.” At one point, the sniper left a message to further terrorize the community, saying something like, “Your children are not safe anywhere or anytime.”

I attended a Wednesday evening service at a local CS Church that night, and the readings were all about how God protects his children everywhere and all the time. As I drove home from that service, I continued praying about the situation. Thinking about the sniper, I knew the rule was, “Love your enemies.” (Matt 5:44) Under such circumstances, this seemed unthinkable, except that I had, over the years, learned something of the importance of

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loving one's enemies and had a little insight into its spiritual power. So I started praying to love the sniper.

After some preliminaries, I turned to an approach I had used to healing effect on several previous occasions. I started thinking specifically about how God, divine Love, was his mother and father. I knew that, as a child of God, he was being mothered by God – he was being comforted, nurtured and protected. It seemed odd to be praying for him to be protected, but nevertheless, that is how I prayed. Then I prayed for him to be fathered by God – to be guided, sustained, and strengthened by his divine Father.

As I was driving along, trying to reflect the fathering love of God on him, it suddenly hit me! It came in a burst of inspiration in the words of the Bible verse: "...whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."⁵⁸

In that instant, I saw that because God's father love corrects his children, reflecting God's love on one's enemies, shines on them the correcting power of God. It penetrates the unreal mist of mortality and reveals them more as spiritual reflection. It was a revelation that went way beyond the situation at hand and revealed the spiritual genius behind loving one's enemies. It reflects on them God's powerful and unopposable fathering love and its correcting power.

That reflected love aligns the human picture, by degrees, with their true identity as loving, spiritual ideas and children of God. In that moment, I just knew the sniper would experience the father

⁵⁸ Proverbs 3:12.

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love of God and its power to keep him from acting in a way that was inconsistent with his status as an idea of God.

I should say, that when I stopped at the grocery store that night, I still walked back to my car using a zig-zag route, just in case he hadn't gotten the word yet.

The next morning, I was not surprised to hear on the news that the sniper, who had actually been a man and a teenager, had fallen asleep at a roadside rest area that night, and had been taken into custody with no shots fired.

I often use this same approach when praying for world leaders in trouble spots, not to outline their behavior, but to reflect on them the love of their divine Father-Mother source with its comforting and correcting power.

Loving the sniper (continued) (2020)

After reading this story, a friend said, "Be careful that you are not 'taking credit' for solving this. This section could easily be misread." In considering this, I've come up with the following:

- The first is: God always gets the credit. I recently heard a CS testimony where someone said they wondered whether a problem had just healed itself, and they came to the conclusion that they should always give God the credit. In fact, we should give God the credit for all appearing goodness in our lives and for all disappearing evil, for God is the primal cause of both.
- I was reminded of the Bible verse where Jesus says, "What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24) Accordingly, we

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- reply, “Of course we believe our prayers have power. If we didn’t believe in them, what would be the point?”
- And who knows how many people might have been praying that day and night for resolution of the sniper problem? It would be great if there were hundreds or even thousands.
 - One indicator that our prayers are powerful is the relative impact they have in our own thinking and feeling. Whenever fear, concern or sadness are changed into love, confidence and joy, that is an indication that one’s prayers are working. Perhaps MBE’s highest definition of believing is, “the perception of spiritual Truth.”⁵⁹ When we have keen spiritual insights during prayer, that is a sign that our beliefs are being healed; and that is answered prayer.
 - When praying for others, one thing I have used as an indication that my prayers are complete is when I would not be the least surprised if they called and said they were healed.
 - This reminds me of a movie about C.S. Lewis that I saw some years ago, where he said, “I don’t pray to change God. I pray to change me.”

When the tables are turned (2003)

The first time I had this experience, where a voice turned the tables on me was in the 1980s, when I was praying for a family member. I was silently using MBE’s phrase, “ ... thou gentle beam of living love ...”⁶⁰ As I was knowing this about a dear one, a voice came to me saying, “Not her, you are!”

⁵⁹ *S&H*, 582:2.

⁶⁰ *CSH*, p 23, “Christmas Morn,” words by Mary Baker Eddy.

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I had the same thing happen a few other times. One time I was praying for some small children visiting my backyard swimming pool, and knowing they were, “cared for, watched over, beloved and protected.” A voice said, “You are!”

This may be related to the idea that, to the degree it makes sense to you, and incorporates the Two Great Commandments,⁶¹ it is often best to pray in the first person.

Messages in church (2003)

One time when praying in church, it came to me that, “It’s all about God.” The next week, I asked, “What about them?” The answer was, “I love them all.”

The Golden Rule (2003)

After moving into a house with a nice yard, I had a neighbor who complained about something almost every time I saw her. She didn’t like my fence, my watering the grass (made her weeds grow), the noise from my attic fan, the pool pump, etc. It seemed endless. I told her she was hard to please. I wondered what to do. I knew I could never do enough to make her happy, so I asked myself, “OK, what is the rule?” It is, “Do unto others ...”⁶²

Accordingly, I asked myself, if I were in her place, what would I want? I would want to be able to turn off that pool pump when I was relaxing in my yard or when I had family in the yard for a cookout, as she often did.

⁶¹ Matthew 22:38-39

⁶² Luke 6:31, reads, “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

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I went on the Web and bought a relay and a timer, and got a doorbell button from the hardware store. I mounted the button on her side of my wooden fence and wired it to the timer and relay and then to the pool pump. When you push the button, it turns the pump off for an hour, then it comes back on. If you still want it off, you just push the button again.

A few days later, I saw her husband in their backyard and called him over to where the button was mounted on his side of the fence. I said, listen to the pool pump. Then I pushed the button; it was quiet. He looked at me, and smiled, and put his arm around my shoulder and gave me a warm hug.

I never had trouble with those neighbors again. They brought me vegetables from their garden and plates of food when they had cookouts. And I don't know if they ever actually pushed that button.

Special love list (2004)

A friend told me that an acquaintance of ours had told her a sensational, malicious falsehood about me and another. I was upset and prayed about it. One day, at a CS testimony meeting, someone told of praying about malignancy. He said, "God's man cannot be maligned." I realized that was a truth for me. As a spiritual child of God, I can claim complete immunity from ever being maligned. I also recognized that my acquaintance was also God's perfect child and therefore was incapable of maligning anyone knowingly or unknowingly. With that, my problem was healed. I put that person on my special love list and was blessed for it.

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When this person was leaving the area, some friends held a going away party, which I attended, and was able to give them a warm and authentic hug.

While there, I met a man who shared with me an idea that I've found very useful. He said, "My mama told me, 'All religions fall short of the glory of God.'" Amen.

Praying before the cement dries (2004)

I had, inexplicably, an occasion to fall backward over a wall in a public place onto a hard floor about seven feet down, landing on my back, head and shoulder. I clambered back up over the wall, signed a release statement for the paramedics who had responded, and made my way home.

In praying about it, I was very palpably aware that, until I or anyone else looked at it, the cement was still wet, so to speak – my beliefs were in solution. Although it was painful, I had a clear sense that, until I checked for damage, any outcome was possible, so I got all my praying done before I ever looked, just to give it the freedom to settle out into the best "reality" without my having to work against any limiting beliefs hardened by my own or another's observation.

As I mentioned earlier, I think this is related to that principle in quantum mechanics, that the state of a system is indeterminate until it is observed. It was actually a number of weeks before I looked. And by then, all was well.

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It's not always about me (2004)

It was Christmas Eve, 2004, around 10:00 PM and about 25 degrees F., and I was alone in the dark, stepping into the freezing surf in my rubber boots, looking out into thousands of miles of dark ocean, 50 yards down from the boardwalk, in a desolate, all but completely abandoned, Ocean City, MD., without a soul in sight. I could see nothing but a faint moon shrouded in clouds and the roaring, crashing tide – freezing cold, vivid, dark, solitude. I was very aware that there was no one to see me or even know I was there, no one to notice, were I just to disappear into the dark sea without a trace.

I had recently become particularly aware of the second verse of the Bible, and I was declaring over and over out loud: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void; *and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters,* and God said, ‘Let there be light.’ ...”⁶³

I was standing looking out into the expansive, relentless swelling deep, feeling the bubbling surf washing the sand out from under my feet, hearing only the roaring ocean, feeling it, strongly, disturbingly, drawing me down into the vast fathomless fluid darkness like a giant magnet. It was unnerving to feel a strong and inexplicably foreboding fear, beckoning me from that dark surging ocean, as if liquid death was calling me into the deep.

About a day later, on the other side of the world, there was a massive earthquake and tsunami, with the loss of 230,000 souls.

⁶³ Genesis 1:1-3.

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My lesson was, it's not always about me. I should be more alert to mental signs that prayer is needed for all mankind.

Your work is going to pick up (2004)

During 2004 I had about six weeks work. As I was out in the garden, thinking about what to do, a question came to me: "Are you OK with your life as it is right now?" In fact, I was enjoying my free time, despite worries that I should be working more. The thought came to me, "Don't do anything different until you have to." I took that as an order.

During the trip to Ocean City, I woke up on Christmas morning, and the thought popped into my head, "Your consulting work is going to pick up."

A few days later I got an email from a former colleague, and over the next few weeks we talked about a project his company was interested in having me manage. I had told him earlier that, as a consultant, I didn't want to be their project manager, but I would be glad to help them kick it off and get it set up, which is often the hard part.

After a conference call, it started to look like they were ignoring my request and were trying to sign me up to manage this project that had, in my view, questionable and challenging prospects, and that would require me to commute and stay over most weeknights in a city several hours away.

To make it a little more complicated, I kept wondering about the message I had received a few weeks before, "Your consulting work is going to pick up." What if this project was what that was talking about? I really needed the work, but then I thought about

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the guidance: “Don’t do anything different until you have to.” This was certainly different in a lot of ways. I emailed back telling them I wished that I could be that person for them, but I wasn’t, and again I outlined all the things I could do to help them kick off their project. There was no reply, and I never heard from them again.

In the meantime, I heard back from some folks I had worked with in the recent past, and they were interested in bringing me in again. That work ramped up quickly and kept me fully and profitably engaged for the next 14 years.

Every once in a while, when a great opportunity is coming our way, which we haven’t yet seen, it seems like we get offered something that isn’t quite right, almost as if to see if we will fall for it. When we walk away from the not quite right situation in faith, without knowing if anything else is coming, then we are ready for the prize. The story about finding my CS teacher may illustrate a similar pattern.

Minding my business (2005)

I had recently taken over a consulting position that included facilitating quarterly management meetings for a large defense project where about 25 managers and engineers had been convening over a period of years, and we were meeting at an off-site facility in Albuquerque, NM. This was a relatively new job for me and I was new to the group.

As I was sitting in the conference room, in the early moments of discussions that I would be leading for the rest of the day, the whole situation just seemed strange to me. I started wondering, “What am I doing here? Why am I in the defense business again?”

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Why am I with these people talking about nuclear weapons? Is this what I should be doing?” And so on. In that moment it didn’t make sense to me to be doing what I was doing.

I went back to the rule I’d learned some years before, “Figure out what business you’re in, and then mind your own business.” (See 1985 story.) Well, I knew I wanted to be about my Father’s business, and that my guide to that is “the song of angels” – “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Starting to pray with this, I thought about glorifying God and giving God the glory, and I thought about reflecting the transcendent idea that God is already being glorified everywhere, especially in that conference room. I started going around the room silently knowing and appreciating how each individual was reflecting their true identity as a child of God, and I focused on the God-like qualities that each individual was expressing, like intelligence, diligence, cooperation, unselfishness and so on. I was encouraging in my thought the spiritual vision that God was right there, being expressed and glorified by everyone. That gave me a sense of peace about what I was doing – I was minding my business – and the meeting proceeded along throughout the day.

After the meeting, my main government customer came up to me and said, “You know, of course, this is the best this meeting has ever gone.”

My whole duty (2007)

I don’t remember when the symptoms started, but by morning I was facing the full onset of a sore throat and flu. After praying briefly to be free from the misery and wretchedness, the thought

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of taking up arms against it using further prayerful arguments seemed pointless. It was not what I wanted. I wanted more dominion than arguing against the flu, its symptoms and related beliefs.

I felt as if I was burdened by the need to do some impossible thing. Thinking of the spiritual tools I had to work with, the words that came to me were, "Miserable comforters are ye all." (Job 16:2) As I sat down to think about it, the next phrase that came to me was like the words of Elijah, when he was despondent, "Just let me die, I am no better than my fathers." (I Kings 19:4) As I continue thinking about it, I arrived at Paul's words (Romans 7:24), where he says, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" And then another Bible phrase, "I am no more worthy to be your son, make me as your hired servant." (Luke 15:19) Then I thought, what I really need to do is to love God and to love man in his likeness, "for that is the whole duty of man." (Eccl: 12:13) I realized, I can do that!

I can love God and love man in his image and likeness. And that is enough.

All my mental anguish disappeared in that instant and the sore throat and flu symptoms just faded away.

Motorcycle Diaries (2007)

I was visiting friends in Colorado, and we went up into the Rocky Mountains on a bright, sparkly day in the spring in his station wagon. I was feeling somewhat caged and wishing we were in my Jeep with the top down. Then I saw a beautiful shiny black Italian motorcycle parked outside the restaurant where we had lunch. I thought, now that is how to see the Rockies.

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Coming back home a few days later, words in my head said, “You have to cross the Rocky Mountains on a Harley.”

I’d never ridden a motorcycle before other than once in high school, briefly out in a field. Being a bit of a car guy, I’d always liked motorcycles, but figured, since I was sort of clumsy and absent minded, it wouldn’t be a good idea. Well, the problem was I realized I could no longer accept those limitations. I had come to the point where I knew I had to accept that I reflected the presence and dominion of infinite Mind. I didn’t have an excuse to say no.

At one point, I was in a motorcycle shop and saw a big bike, and I thought, “That is a beast.” But then, I considered that God gave man dominion over the beasts of the field, and perhaps it was my time to exercise that dominion.

The next spring, I took a beginner’s motorcycle training course, but didn’t pass the riding test, and when I came back a few weeks later for a retake, I didn’t feel comfortable on the bike and, looking down at the motorcycle, the thought came to me, “You don’t want to be doing this.” I thought, “OK, I was obedient. I did my job. I don’t mind just walking away.”

A month or so later, the thought came back, just see what you can do. I found where I could rent a bike in a big parking lot and just ride in circles, and after that determined that I wanted to see it through. I got a learner’s permit, bought a beginner’s motorcycle and practiced for a few months, riding around town and doing figure-eights in parking lots.

After about 500 miles of practice, I went back and passed the riding test and got my license. A few days later I was on a rented

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Harley-Davidson motorcycle heading down the highway at 70 mph. Looking down briefly at the pavement whizzing by, five inches under my feet, the thought came to me, “There is no margin for error.” I knew that meant there could be no room anywhere in my thought for error. Was I willing to take responsibility for knowing that there was just no place for error of any kind in my thought?

Motorcycle Diaries – Rocky Mountains (2008)

Coming back from a business trip to the West Coast, I decided to stop in Denver and rent a Harley to cross the Rockies. After spending the night with my friends in Fort Collins, I headed west, crossing over the Rockies by way of Estes Park.

It only took a few hours to get to the other side of the mountain range, after which I stopped for lunch and then proceeded west to see what was next. When civilization seemed to be fading behind me, I turned north on Rte. 13 into Wyoming, heading toward a little spot on the map hoping to find a place to sleep. In late afternoon, just over the state line, I stopped at a convenience store in Baggs, WY, a little town that seemed to have almost nothing but bail bondsmen and taxidermist shops.

After buying a snack, I was sitting on the bike, with the starter fob wedged under my leg, looking at a map, when two big pickup trucks barreled into the parking lot on either side of me throwing up clouds of dirt and gravel. I didn’t want to be around them, so I started the bike quickly, pulled out and headed up the road.

I motored into the twilight, figuring there might be a motel where the road crossed interstate I-80, about 50 miles north. After a restless ride, I got to the junction with the interstate and found

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no signs of life, just an abandoned fireworks stand and a big vacant gravel lot. Leaving the bike running, I put on my yellow rain gear, since it was getting dark and cold, and then proceeded 25 miles east to the next town on the map.

After a price check at the first motel in Rawlins, WY, I decided to look for a better deal, but the motorcycle wouldn't start. I had the horrifying realization that meant the little black plastic starter fob (the size of three poker chips, with a chrome key chain attached) was not near the motorcycle, which meant I'd lost it somewhere since I'd last started up at the convenience store 75 miles back. Now I was in the middle of nowhere with 700 pounds of dead motorcycle. I checked into the motel.

The next morning, I prayed for two hours before getting out of bed. I remember thinking, "You wanted an adventure, well now you have an adventure. You can't buy an experience like this."

There was another thing in my spiritual toolkit that I'd used before, and it was, when in a difficult situation, think about how you will be thinking and feeling when your problem is solved. Once you've identified that, start thinking and feeling that way.

I figured, when this problem was solved, I'd be filled with joy and gratitude, so I started being grateful to God and rejoicing.

After making a few calls and trying unsuccessfully to find an open rental car office on a Saturday, I hired a local taxi to drive me back along the route to the convenience store, figuring either the fob fell off my seat along the way or in that parking lot when I left suddenly. I was not unaware that, humanly speaking, the odds of success in this venture were around zero.

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Riding along in the taxi, after the first 25 miles on the divided highway, and now headed south, I started watching the opposite lane and shoulder of the road in case the fob had fallen off somewhere along what had been a fidgety 50-mile ride. It came to me very clearly that this exercise was about paying attention, and not just for a few minutes, but for every second of the way. My eyes were fixed on scanning the road surface and the far shoulder, mile after mile, mile after mile, never looking away for even an instant.

After about 25 miles I saw a sparkle in the gravel on the far shoulder of the road and said to the cab driver, "Stop. Make a U-turn." He turned around and pulled over and I got out to investigate that little sparkle I'd seen glinting in the sun. Returning to the taxi, I said "This is what we were looking for," and I showed him the black plastic fob on its little sparkly key chain. As we headed back to town, I was filled with joy and gratitude. And it felt so familiar.

Back in town, I checked out of the motel, started up the bike, what a sweet sound, and went down the road for a big pancake breakfast. Plotting my way out of town on the map, I noticed a road that turned into a dotted line. That looked interesting, so I headed south on Rte. 71 that soon turned into a rough dirt and gravel road that went through 40 miles of craggy, barren desolation, before finishing up through a spectacular grove of aspens.

My life in the recliner (2011)

What started out as a frozen shoulder in the late summer of 2010 turned into all limbs nearly frozen a few months later. A few calls

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to CS practitioners helped me through the initial stages of handling the fear. But I knew it was my work to do.

We won't speculate about causes, because, as we know, there is never a cause for error.

Without getting too much into it, I will say that I started carrying my lunch to my downstairs office each day so I wouldn't have to climb the stairs at noon. I cancelled daily deliveries of the newspaper, because it was too hard to get up and down the six front steps. It felt like a life or death struggle to get up off the couch or out of a chair. And it was too painful to sleep in my bed, so I was fortunate to be able to sleep in the recliner.

One time on a "CS Daily Lift" podcast,⁶⁴ the speaker talked about how the kingdom of God is within us. Therefore, no matter how long it takes, the solution we seek is already with us and in us – it's only a matter of working it out. That was comforting and encouraging.

My two favorite hymns from that time were, "Joy to the World" (164) and "Holy, Holy, Holy" (117)⁶⁵ and I sang them frequently.

During this time, much of my conscious thought was prayerfully focused. Occasionally, on those days when it almost seemed futile or I wasn't getting any traction in my prayers, I would let go of all and simply know that, "God is working his purpose out in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and

⁶⁴ www.christianscience.com/christian-healing-today/daily-lift.

⁶⁵ *CSH*, words by Isaac Watts (164) and Reginald Heber (117).

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none can stay his hand or say unto him what doest thou," which may be a conflation of a Christian hymn⁶⁶ and Daniel 4:35.

When I think of the turning point, I felt it was when I was pacing back and forth praying in the dark in my living room around three o'clock one morning. The problem I was confronting was more than just mine, it was feeling my problem as part of a universal human plight. I was declaring and standing for spiritual truths to lift the burden of suffering, injustice, mortality and cosmic unfairness for all mankind.

Sometime later, I was grocery shopping, and they were playing that Dido⁶⁷ song, "White Flag," with the lines, "... I will go down with this ship, and I won't put up my hands up and surrender, there will be no white flag above my door ..." and it brought tears to my eyes, as I leaned on my shopping cart, because that was my life.

And then, for practical advice, there was a John Wooden quote, seen in the newspaper, "Don't let what you can't do keep you from doing what you can do."

At some point, over a year later, although at this writing I consider it a work in progress, I was able to sleep in my bed and get back on the motorcycle.

⁶⁶ *CSH*, p. 82, words by Arthur Campbell Ainger, 1894.

⁶⁷ English singer-songwriter, "Dido" Florian Cloud de Bouneville O'Malley Armstrong.

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Motorcycle Diaries – Awareness (2012)

One day I went for a ride up Rte. 270 towards Rockville, MD. As I was riding along, consciously knowing that I was “cared for, watched over, beloved and protected,” I looked over at a horrendous line of traffic coming south into the DC area, almost at a standstill. I started praying for them, too, knowing that they were all cared for, watched over, beloved and protected.

In operational environments, one important theme is to attain and maintain situational awareness. On that ride, I don't remember the details, but I became aware that the most important thing is to attain and maintain *spiritual situational awareness*. That enables us to foresee and forestall, through appropriate prayer, as yet unseen events that may be coming our way.

If one has a sense of fear or foreboding, that is the time to become attuned to the facts of the spiritual reality that embraces us. I've had those experiences in the past, but I was pleased to be able to put that name on it, to practice being consciously aware of the mental atmosphere, and to be alert to respond appropriately based on spiritual situational awareness.

Motorcycle Diaries – Object fixation (2012)

There is a principle in motorcycle riding that you need to look where you want to go, and very definitely not look for long where you don't want to go. When one is in a tight spot and looks at an oncoming car or light pole, there is a tendency for the bike to steer in that direction. So, in a way, your head and eyes steer the motorcycle. Occasionally, one locks on an object of fear and finds

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it hard to look away. If this isn't broken, it doesn't end well. It is called "object fixation."

On the motorcycle, when at speed, the motorcycle turns by leaning. Your head will follow your eyes, your shoulders will follow your head, and the motorcycle will follow your shoulders, so looking where you want to go will take you where you want to go. I've been in a number of situations where there was an on-coming car, a curb stone, a tree or a sign-post looming in front of me. The way out was always to turn my head far towards the escape route. It takes faith in the process, to look away when danger appears right in your path, but one learns that looking away is your only hope. And it works.

There is a spiritual parallel to this in Christian Science. When we look at a problem, it keeps us from going in the direction where we want to go. As I've written here before, it is better to be looking to the spiritual solution. I remember one time, having a sharp pain deep in my foot as I was walking along. I recognized it as being just like an object fixation, and it occurred to me to look away from the pain to thoughts of God, and the pain soon disappeared.⁶⁸

Motorcycle Diaries – Just flip the switch (2013)

When starting out riding a motorcycle, one is reminded to flip off the turn signal after each turn. Because motorcycles turn by leaning, there is usually no automatic shutoff. A sure sign of a rookie, and also a safety issue, is riding along after a turn with your turn signal blinking away, endlessly signaling that you are

⁶⁸ See *S&H*, 157:1

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going to turn, when you are not – also signally that you are incompetent and don't know how to ride.

At first, I would look down sometime after a turn and see the light flashing and then berate myself for being such a dunce. As time went on, when the thought came to me that I might have the signal on, I'd just hit the switch. I didn't even need to know. There was no guilt, no self-condemnation, no recrimination. Just hit the switch.

It reminded me of how we learn to handle untoward suggestions that come to our thought. We don't have to feel bad about them, blame ourselves, feel guilty or discouraged – just hit the switch – declare for the allness of God, rejoice and continue on.

One morning soon after waking, I felt this gray cloud of the blahs hovering in my head. A suggestion of disappointment and discouragement wafted through the air, as if to send me down the path of saying, "After all these years and all my prayerful work, and I'm still susceptible to having this awful state of mind?" But instead I chose another road and simply declared, "Infinite Spirit is all-in-all." That set a new course for the day. I just flipped the switch.

Unexpected insight (~2015)

I had a drainage problem in my backyard, apparently due to some underground springs, and there was often standing water in the springtime. I consulted a number of companies for assistance and received proposals for elaborate and questionable landscaping solutions costing upwards of \$10,000.

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One night I was tossing and turning in bed thinking about the alternatives, none of which appeared promising. As I was praying about this, I focused on what I really wanted, and that was to get back to sleep!

I lay there just establishing a sense of oneness with God. Whenever a detail of this problem would come into my mind, I would just block it out by thinking about being at-one with God.

Just as I was beginning to peacefully drift off to sleep, a picture flashed into my mind's eye, as if I were viewing a photograph for about two seconds. It showed my backyard, with a drainpipe running diagonally from the corner of a retaining wall to the back-perimeter fence. And then I fell asleep.

A day or two later, I took the shovel and spent about 20 minutes digging a trench just like I'd seen in the picture in my mind. When I was done, I looked over to my neighbor's side of the fence and saw that my trench fed the water directly into his water handling system. A week later I put a plastic drainpipe in the trench and repaired the sod. It was not the complete solution to that problem, but it was a giant leap forward. And it cost about nothing.

Victory (2015)

One Friday morning I awoke with severe tooth pain that got worse as the day wore on. I started praying, but don't remember specifically how I was praying about it on Friday or Saturday. I went for a walk on Sunday afternoon, and ended up praying for God to be my only I. After praying like that for a bit, I ended up really getting into God's face about it, saying, "If you're the only I, then be my only I!" I didn't feel completely comfortable calling him out like that, but I did it. Be my only I.

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Since the feeling in my mouth felt like I was being tortured, I decided to pray about torture. As I did this, I realized a need to handle this for all mankind. My heart and my prayerful thoughts went out to those around the world who are tortured by inhumanity, war, sickness, and starvation. After prayerfully handling torture for a while, I ended up thinking, “What is the infinite torture of infinite Love?”

I had some history with the word torture from my prayerful work and spiritual analysis over the years. I knew that torture is related to words like tortuous, turning and twisting. So, in handling torture in this instance, I quickly saw a connection between torturing, twisting and turning and how infinite spiritual thinking occasionally seems to torture human logic, as if torturing the meanings of words, twisting negative words and letting them be infinite, until they turn right-side up for good. “I’m the infinite torture of infinite Love.” Once I really got into it, it didn’t take more than a few minutes to dispatch the idea of torture and clear my thought for whatever would come next. I was enamored of the healing power of the infinite idea.

As I continued on my walk, it got quiet for about a mile, and I started wondering what I was accomplishing. In response to that, a question whispered itself in my mind: “What are your assumptions?”

I knew the right answer: “Everything is already alright.”

The next afternoon I was sitting at my desk working on a document for my job, still dealing with the pain, with one side of my face now all puffed up. My garden helper was doing some painting upstairs, and when he came down, he could see my

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swollen face. I muttered something to him about how, if I had any sense, I'd be in bed. As I continued to work on my laptop, drafting text, copying and pasting graphics and tables from a number of programs, a quiet dialogue was playing out in the back of my mind.

I imagined my co-workers, who were mostly engineers and scientists, saying, "You are relying on prayer for that? Why, that's just nuts." And then a brief vision came into my mind's eye, as if I was seeing that point of view, as if I was looking through a big pipe, and seeing the material world. That tunnel vision spoke to me in clear thoughts: "What you see out there, that's all there is. It's just matter. It's a material world. There's nothing else."

I spontaneously rejected that picture and that assertion, "No!" I affirmed, "My whole life is based on the idea that all reality is undergirded by the metaphysical. And God is the master of the metaphysical. And I am at-one with God!"

And that was it!

My problem was gone, and I knew it was gone.

Soon after, my project work was finished, and I got up from my desk. This one word just welled up from inside me: "Victory!"

A little while later, my garden helper came downstairs. He looked at me and said, "How are you feeling?" I said, "Why do you ask?" He replied, with a chuckle, "You almost look like a normal person." The swelling was gone. And the pain, too.

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Pities like a father (2015)

To accommodate a new friend's urgent request for me to accompany her at a special event, I rescheduled a planned vacation, at considerable expense. After a candid conversation, however, she disinvited me from the event and didn't want to be friends anymore.

The first thing I prayed about was to un-self love. I seem to have a pattern in personal relationships of humanly overextending myself in love, and then having the opportunity to un-self it, which may be intentional. In this instance, I worked with the story of how MBE once, when confronted by a too personal sense of self, pointed to her wood stove, and said, "It heats. I love."⁶⁹

I prayed to embrace those two words, "I love," as my only sense of identity, which healed any personal sense of hurt feelings. The next topic was Truth. What really was the truth about my friend and about me? After praying about that for a while, I thought, well, I've prayed about Love and Truth, what does Life have to say about this? The answer was that God as Life makes all things new. I worked with the idea that neither of us were bound to a belief of a past, but our lives were fresh and new every moment.

Those lines of prayer seemed to lift most of the cloud from my thought, but my goal was to gain that gracious loving spirit, as if I were a CS practitioner that she might call, to be able to embrace her in the warmth of sincere, enveloping, unconditional spiritual love.

⁶⁹ MBE was responding to someone asking her, "But do you love *me*?" So far, the only reference I've found for this story is in my class notes.

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I kept praying about this off and on for a few more weeks. One day, while I was on vacation, I had just logged off my laptop, where I had used my security password based on the hymn “Trust the Eternal when the shadows gather ...”.⁷⁰ Soon after, while walking the dog for my Airbnb host, a further line from that hymn came to mind, “God the unchanging, pities like a father ...,” and with it came a palpable feeling of the Father’s love for my friend, and I felt it, as if coming down into my shoulders and actually flowing through me to her.

I saw that what she really needed was to feel her Father’s love. I realized that if I had been her father, and she my little girl, I wouldn’t feel hurt at all, but would just feel a father’s unconditional love.

That same father love was there for me to extend to someone else, around that time, and it wiped away any feelings of being undervalued and left me feeling like a transparency for the Father’s love.

It never happened (2017)

I flew to Massachusetts from my home in Washington, DC to visit friends in Maine, and picked up a rental car at Logan Airport in Boston. I booked the car through an online service, and when, at the rental counter, they asked if I want to buy insurance, which was equally as expensive as the car rental, I said no, in no uncertain terms, and initialed all the places in the contract to verify I declined the insurance.

⁷⁰ *CSH*, p. 359, words by William P. McKenzie.

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At the time, I felt like they were just trying to rip me off, and I felt strongly enough about it that afterward I had to pray in the parking lot to correct my thinking about that company and to know they were all God's children, expressing only His love.

After a detour to see the sites in Rockport, I was driving slowly in a long line of cars snaking along a two-lane country road, to get back to the highway, as directed by my GPS. After looking over my shoulder to my left to read a street sign, I looked back and saw the car directly in front of me had completely stopped not 15 feet away. I slammed down hard on the breaks and rear-ended that car with a bang.

The three young men in the car said they were fine and, skipping over the steps where my hood was crunched and the car wouldn't start and needed to be towed and the policeman helped me get another rental car, I was back on the road to Maine a few hours later, praying and giving gratitude for a harmonious resolution of all the logistics.

As I continued to pray, affirming that there are no accidents in the divine Mind, a subtle, lurking question arose: Why did this happen? I had been having a such an inspiring day. Accordingly, I began declaring to myself, "It never happened!" That is, it never happened to the spiritual children of God dwelling in the kingdom of heaven, and that is our only reality.

As I was declaring this to myself, over and over, "It never happened," a question clearly whispered itself into my thought: "Do you really believe you could know 'it never happened' with such spiritual clarity that it would wipe out any adverse consequences and there would be no after-effects?" I affirmed

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that I absolutely did believe that was possible, as unlikely or rather as impossible and ridiculous as that would seem to human reasoning. I just knew the power of spiritual truth, that in spiritual reality, which is the only reality, it never happened; and that could be demonstrated.

I arrived at my destination and continued praying about this off and on for the next several days. As you might imagine, one of the thoughts I had to pray about was regret, "If only I had signed up for that insurance."

I dealt with the required reporting to my own insurance company and continued praying about this for the rest of my vacation. When I returned this second rental car back in Boston, I paid a towing fee and the rental car fee and flew home.

A week later in talking with my insurance company, they said, since you bought the rental car insurance, there will be no involvement of your insurance company. I said, but I didn't buy the insurance. Then I talked with the rental car insurance rep, and she said the same thing. I thought they were confused. I knew I had declined the insurance, but I figured I'd let the professionals work it out.

At the end of the month, however, in reviewing my credit card statement, I was reminded that I'd already paid for the rental car through the online booking service, so apparently the fee I paid when returning the car was for insurance from the rental car company – which I never signed up for! The upshot of this was that, as far as any adverse consequences to me or my insurance company, it never happened!

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Going back through the details of this, and considering the timelines, could lead to some interesting questions. That is, when exactly, and how, and on whose say-so, did I get signed up for that insurance?

Glee (2019)

I was out walking one day, in the early morning, just praying about thoughts that came to me. A friend had recently invited me to attend a college glee club concert, and the word “glee” popped into my mind. I had some history with that word, so I prayed with it for a bit, thinking about God’s glee being infinite and what that might mean.

It reminded me of an experience I’d had in 1982, when I’d been working on my book, less than a year after the first PC had been invented. Possibly due to a memory-full error or an errant deletion, I lost a major chunk of the book, back in the days before there was an undelete function. The work of several completed chapters was just gone, vanished. It was devastating.

After lots of prayer, and struggling with a special purpose computer utility we had at the office, I went in on a Saturday and, after a few hours, was able to figure out how to restore all my lost work. It was incredible. I was so grateful. I remember the unusual and vivid emotion as I was driving out of the underground garage that Saturday. It was glee. It was like resurrection from the dead. It was lost and was found.

So back to the present. An hour after my walk, I picked up my friend to go for breakfast, in my car, that had been having a starter problem. The problem had been occasional and intermittent, but it failed to start right then in front of her

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house. I flipped a number of switches on and off and jiggled all the controls and, finally, it started, and we headed off for breakfast. About a block later, the car stalled in DC morning traffic, and then it wouldn't start. I tried and tried. But nothing. I pushed the car somewhat out of the stream of traffic, but the starter was just completely silent. I tried all manner of gyrations of switches and actions, but nothing. After trying to get it started for about 30 minutes, I reluctantly assented to the inevitable and called for road service to tow my car to a repair shop not far away.

My friend went to get some coffee and muffins for us, in lieu of breakfast, while I prepared the car for the tow truck, taking my things out of the trunk, and bundling up. Standing at the curb, watching as others tried to navigate around my car on the busy street, it occurred to me that it was too cold (27 F) to be standing outside, and I should just get back in the car and wait. I got in and put the key in the ignition. Just then a word popped into my mind – it was “glee.” I turned the key. The car started.

There was one other time when I had a run-in with glee. It was in the fall of 1977, when I was having new insights into the nature of ultimate reality, and the thought came to me, “Is it really possible it is that good?”

Paradise (2019)

In the spring of 2019, on the occasion of the last meeting of the CS Association of Joseph Heard, I wrote out my memories of the life-changing Sunday School class I had with him my senior year in high school (See 1966). Soon after, I related that experience during a CS Wednesday evening testimony meeting.

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I had always thought of the first part of that discussion as an interesting introduction to the real topics, but it occurred to me that the point about reality being entirely in consciousness was a more important part of the story than I had appreciated. It sets the foundational premise for what I call the metaphysical theory of existence. As MBE says, it is “mental quackery” to try to use prayer to change matter or to remedy a problem that is real.⁷¹

For the last few months I had been playing out the saga of Farmer McGregor and Peter Rabbit, with a bunny in my garden. This little bunny was eating newly planted zinnias, as if it was his life’s mission. I had scrupulously examined the fence around my backyard and plugged all the holes. Once I chased the bunny out through the open gate and closed it, but a few days later, there he was again, munching away.

The morning after my relating at church the Sunday School message from my high school days, I saw the bunny again in the garden feasting on young zinnias. By that time, he had taken at least a bite or two out of more than half, that my garden helper and I had just planted.

In the past, in thinking about my garden, I had come to realize that paradise isn’t “out there” but is in consciousness. As I was going for a walk that morning, it occurred to me that I had to consider that, based on that long-ago Sunday School lesson, my garden, the bunny, and the zinnias were entirely within

⁷¹ *S&H*, 395:21, “It is mental quackery to make disease a reality – to hold it as something seen and felt – and then to attempt its cure through Mind.”

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consciousness, and the only substance or activity in the garden was the divine energy of spiritual love.

I was also aware that to be consistent in my spiritual thinking, I would have to forgo any willful efforts to deal with this bunny invasion, even if it meant letting him eat all the flowers bare. I examined my motives for caring about this and had to know that any natural beauty I would want to share with guests to my garden would be coming to them directly from divine Love.

A few weeks later, I was watering the garden in the morning and saw the bunny. I realized that I needed to take a stand that everything in the garden was governed by divine Love. I prayed

to know that there is no hate or destruction in the paradise of divine consciousness. Taking this approach was not without price, as I had to let go any concern or thought of a willful approach to solving this problem, and simply put my trust in the truth of the ever-presence of divine Love, and the consequent ever-absence of anything unlike good.

A few moments later, my flip-flops had become slippery from the watering, and I kicked them off as I walked back to my patio barefoot. Just before reaching the patio, I felt a sharp sting in my foot, and realized that I had apparently stepped on a bee in the grass.

I was just mentally quiet for a few minutes, and then the simple truth came into my thought and I silently declared, "There is no venom or hate in paradise." Instantly the pain disappeared. It was like flipping a switch.

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In that moment, I was very aware that the stand I'd taken moments before, that the energy of spiritual love was the only presence or activity in the garden, and my commitment and mental sacrifice to follow through with that, regardless of the consequences, had laid the foundation for my being able to simply speak the word and have it result in the immediate healing of the bee sting. Since I had "walked the talk," my word was with power.

I knew that was the demonstration, and was so grateful, and didn't even think anything more about the bunny chomping away in the garden. I had already received what I wanted.

A few weeks later, I was watering the garden, and the little bunny dashed out from bushes right in front of me and made a beeline through a very small hole under the fence into the yard next-door.

Our pre-existing condition (2021)

When I had three cats, I used to consider that all they knew about God might be what they learned from me. Was it dour, punitive and exacting or happy, loving and forgiving?

When I found that some mice had decided to stay warm in my house over the winter, I made a point of impressing on them that Life was about Love. I thought of an old Sentinel article where someone got a message from God, "I love you, and the answer is no." At one point, I had perhaps the twentieth mouse in a tiny plastic have-a-heart trap, and I'm walking him across the street to join his pals who I'd released on a nearby hill. Overnight the hill had become quite icy. I side-stepped up about three-quarters of the way, declaring "God is my Life" with each step, until I lost traction, fell and slid down the hill like a human toboggan. As I reached the bottom, somewhat relieved to be in one piece, I took

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a few steps to the sidewalk and suddenly my feet flew out from under me as I stepped on a patch of glare ice. I landed hard on the ground hitting my head and shoulder. At this point, I am continuing to declare, God is my Life, but also declaring that there are no accidents, and it never happened. As I was getting up on my feet, I looked down on the sidewalk and saw a drip, drip, dripping of blood. I remembered a recent testimony at church where someone mentioned the trial in S&H where Mrs. Eddy says we cannot be punished for deeds of kindness. Since I had been on an errand of mercy, I invoked that law in my behalf.

After I regained my footing and sent the mouse to run off into the woods, I started walking home. I had started praying with the basic truths that I mentioned, but after a lifetime of relying on spiritual means for health care, I've learned that challenges sometimes are not met on the surface, but we need to go higher and deeper. We need to learn more about God's love and to be more thorough in handling any claims of error. I knew that I never fell out of the arms of divine Love, and kept prayerfully declaring that I never fell. I was aware that I needed to find a good spiritual foundation, if I was going to be declaring that it never happened. It came to me to consider that fact in the past, the present, and the future. Man never fell in the beginning; I didn't fall in the present; and we don't need to fear falling in some distant future.

I knew that the basis for my prayers was to identify as a born-again Christian Scientist. Even though that term may have been superficially adopted by some denominations, it doesn't change the fact that Jesus said, "Marvel not, that I say ye must be born again." Being born-again is really the basis from which we pray. We are not mortals trying to get spiritual. We are ideas of God, never born into matter. Not born of the flesh but of the Spirit. It is from that basis that we can understandingly and authoritatively say, I never fell.

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Thinking about this idea of being born of the Spirit, brought the idea that I had a *pre-existing condition*. We all do. Our pre-existing condition is that we are conceived as ideas of God – spiritual and perfect. Sometimes the word perfect has suggested to me the idea of being humanly impeccable, which can be a hard sell. I often like to think of perfect in terms of *as-made*. So being perfect means being just as we are made by God, in our original spiritual identity. I knew there was a connection between that pre-existing condition and the pre-existence Mrs. Eddy refers to when she writes that Jesus’s “steadfast and true knowledge of pre-existence, of the nature and inseparability of God and man, made him mighty.”⁷²

I really like that idea that our pre-existing condition is to be the original, sinless, innocent, spiritual idea of divine Love.

Those are some of the spiritual highlights from this adventure. I went home and cleaned up the cut and continued to pray from the standpoint that it never happened. It involved thinking and praying in the absolute and speaking and living in the relative, taking the practical steps that seemed right while maintaining the spiritual position that it never happened in spiritual reality. I love the statement Geoffrey Barratt makes in an article in the Anthology, Volume II – if it is metaphysically true that means it is literally true.

There was a lot more to pray about, handling everything that came to me, over the next 24 hours, and by then everything was pretty much just fine. MBE wrote, “ ... every trial of our faith in God makes us stronger ... ”⁷³

Afterward I did feel stronger, and so grateful for this experience that gave me a sense of moment-by-moment care that comes to us when we turn whole heartily to God, infinite Spirit.

⁷² MIS 189: 3-5

⁷³ MIS 160: 13-14

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No splinters (2021)

This experience falls into that familiar category where the problem we end up solving is nothing like what it appeared to be. I had been making fence repairs in my backyard and caught a small splinter in my finger. It was just below the surface, and I couldn't grab it with tweezers or with the tip of a pin. The next day, as it had gotten sore, I was pondering what to do next, whether to keep gnawing on it or perhaps attempt surgery with a sewing needle. A few minutes into this thought process, I thought, "Hey, wait a minute. I fall down and cut my scalp and bleed on the sidewalk, and rely on prayer from the get go, and now I've got a tiny splinter in my finger and I'm contemplating surgery!?" That woke me up to start praying.

After a few rounds of spiritual affirmations and denials, I lifted my thought to infinite Love to see what meanings I might discern. Thinking about the viewpoint, I am the infinite splinter of infinite Love, what came to me was not a little piece of wood, but a division or splitting of one into two. That led to the declaration, there are no splinters in infinite Love. Working with this soon unfolded to me a clear healing spiritual message: "There are no splinters in Christian Science." And it had nothing to do with my finger.

The message came with a feeling of enveloping love and unity. It showed me the spiritual reality that there are no splinter (groups) in the future unfoldment of Christian Science to mankind. It brought a warm assurance that the infinite spiritual ideas I've been nurturing for decades will not end up being a splinter group, but are part of an unfoldment of spiritual oneness in Christian Science. It showed me a future where spiritual seekers around the world find a home in Christian Science as it unfolds to us

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increasingly the oneness of God and the unity of man. I could feel in spiritual sense that “the seekers of the Light are one.” (Hymn #218)

I consider it a prophetic vision: There are no splinters in Christian Science, and the seekers of the Light are one!

After I got that, I just loved that tiny little splinter in my finger as if it were a little angel. And when I barely touched it later in the day, and it slid right out, I was even a little disappointed to see it go. It was one of those instances where one is so thrilled with the spiritual inspiration and insight that any sense of a problem just vanishes from thought.

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The Wholeness of the Infinite God-Principle

This section is adapted from text used for a YouTube video by the same title and from a later audio update and supplement posted on my website www.hyperthot.com. It is a work in progress, and your comments and questions are invited.

I want to talk about an important aspect of the God-principle to highlight a little-known characteristic of its special nature. That important aspect is how we most often comprehend the oneness as a kind duality – not that old duality of good and evil, but ultimately as a duality of two opposite goods, that speak to us from the original oneness.

Some of the insights on this topic come from a special kind of thinking – infinite spiritual thinking – which may be a few levels of abstraction beyond what we might call, spiritually minded thinking – and from the ensuing experiences. Of course, my descriptions are mostly finite models or metaphors – perhaps spiritual proto-science – since true knowing of the oneness is whole ‘nother matter.

Infinite spiritual thinking is to this topic as mathematics is to physics. If we were going to talk about quantum mechanics with any rigor, we would need some higher math. Nevertheless, you can learn some of the principles of quantum mechanics without actually doing the math yourself. I’m going to attempt the same approach here, sharing some insights from infinite spiritual thinking, without getting too far into it.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Readers of this book will have had an exposure to *infinite spiritual thinking* from some of the stories particularly starting around 1976.

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This means we are going to take a top-down approach, rather than starting with the world of observation and trying to work our way back to the First Principle. We will use that approach for two reasons: first, it is much simpler, and second, it's really the best way to start thinking about this topic. In practice, I find the only way to get to the infinite oneness is to start there.

For the sake of this discussion, let's just start with our sense of the divine as an infinite spiritual singularity. You may be familiar with the word "singularity" from knowing about theories related to the Big Bang from popular cosmology. In this case, the primary and overwhelming nature of this spiritual singularity is its oneness. This divine singularity, this oneness, is self-existent; everything else is derivative. It would be worthwhile to spend some time thinking and meditating on this idea of infinite spiritual oneness, an infinite self-existent, spiritual singularity, even one infinite I. (That's the first-person singular "I".)

The oneness of the divine is one of its essential characteristics. So when we talk about this oneness as having attributes or qualities, it is to better understand the nature of the oneness. The oneness doesn't devolve into parts; it is indivisible – One. Don't mind that you can't picture that. It is ineffable.

Grasping new ideas is often hindered by the need to let go of old ideas, so I'm trying to use language here that will minimize this hindrance. Instead of starting out by talking about God, I'm starting out using the term God-principle. So you'll know we're not talking about any sort of personal or anthropomorphic idea of God – not some finite strawman. To jump ahead to the important part, let's agree to all the qualities and superlatives

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that are normally associated with the divine.⁷⁵ Such descriptions are important, but they are not germane to this main point about the oneness and the apparent duality of good. In fact, the positive qualities commonly attributed to the divine are widely accepted across many religions. It is interesting that the main differences arise from dealing with negatives. So henceforth, when I use the term “God,” it means the God-Principle – not a supreme being; or even the supreme being; but supreme being itself.

After its oneness, the aspect we are considering here is embedded in the way too-simple expression that *God is good*.

Someone once remarked to me that his spiritual practice had evolved to the point where it was almost like he was worshipping pure goodness. That is an interesting idea. I considered that for a while even thinking of the God-principle as pure infinite spiritual goodness. But I found, even with that collection of superlatives, something was missing.

The key point I want to offer here, is that we commonly experience that “goodness” has two sides to it. For example, it is good that I have a place to live. However, it is also good that there are no snakes in my house. So there is a goodness related to what is and a goodness related to what is not.

It is sort of like one of those advertisements you may have seen on TV where they say their product provides “everything you want and nothing you don’t.”

⁷⁵ To learn more about this, here is “A New Definition of God,” posted at: <http://www.hyperhot.com/God.htm>

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Having everything you want and nothing you don't covers the bases, for something to be considered completely good. This truism comes from and is organic to the nature of divinity and its oneness.

If one's sense of goodness is only affirmative and not also what I am here calling exclusionary, then worshipping pure infinite spiritual goodness will at length fall short of the wholeness of the divine. It's not the whole story. Here are a few examples ...

- Where I worked in the early '90s, we used to debate the definition of quality: does it mean inherent goodness or freedom from defects? As I remember, the other choices were "fitness for use" and "meeting the customers' requirements," which are combinations of both.
- There's a common saying used in the US court system: To tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Over the years, folks have figured out that the whole truth requires the truth and nothing but the truth. There is an exclusionary element required in order to attain wholeness.
- Many of the Bible passages that talk about God being one, also add this exclusionary element – such as, "I am God, and there is none else."⁷⁶
- And from the other side of the world, from the Bhagavad Gita, we have Krishna saying, "I am what is and I am what is not."⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Isaiah 46:9

⁷⁷ *The Bhagavad Gita*, 9:19 (Juan Mascaro translation)

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And further on, he says, “... I am ... to be and not to be.”⁷⁸ His pupil responds, “Thou who art all that is, and all that is not ...”⁷⁹

- The famous scientist, Niels Bohr said, “The opposite of a great truth is another truth.”
- Then there is that favorite F. Scott Fitzgerald quote: “The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.”
- It has been written that God’s truth “is sharper than a two-edged sword.”⁸⁰ Why two-edged? Because it cut two ways, the truth of what is and the truth of what isn’t. And it’s only one sword, only one whole truth.

These examples are not all exactly logically aligned, but all hint at a point of view that can often enable the integration of apparent opposites in oneness – from the standpoint of one infinite I.

So what we are talking about here is to grasp the idea that we most often experience the oneness of divinity in terms of what is and what is not. The real power comes when we glimpse the singularity, that these are one at their source. In rare moments (so far for me, anyway), when we experience the oneness of divinity in prayer, it is a spiritual realization of what really is – accompanied by a nearly simultaneous realization of what is not – of what can’t possibly be. (See example on page 108.)

We learn from quantum theory that an electron can be detected as a particle or as a wave. It is still only one electron, but its

⁷⁸ Ibid, 10:3-5

⁷⁹ Ibid 11:37

⁸⁰ Hebrews 4:12

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particle-ness and wave-ness have been said to be in “superposition.”

In a somewhat similar fashion, we variously experience that the God-principle has an affirmative and an exclusionary aspect to it, I am God and there is none else. It might be useful to consider that these two aspects exist in some sort of superposition in the divine.

The oneness, with its integration of apparent opposites, unfolds itself to our understanding through infinite spiritual thinking, living, and loving. Once you understand the apparent superposition of opposites that seem to inhabit the oneness, you no longer are perplexed by the paradox of being and not being or by other sets of opposites that may have seemed irreconcilable.

So that’s it. That is the important point I wanted to talk about. The infinite I, the infinite oneness, the God-principle, appears in the human dimension with an inclusive and exclusive aspect. It naturally includes all good and naturally excludes any hypothetical opposite. Obviously, bringing this spiritual concept of exclusion into the human scene must be done with great care.

Reaching beyond the human dimension to the ineffable realm of the oneness involves being able to grasp the information in the phrase, “I am God and there is none else,” to be not two ideas but one. One infinite holy I. That’s where the real action is.

When that sinks in, you may wonder how to connect that First-Principle to our world of observation. For now, it may be best to think of it as a potentiality. It is like a potential energy. The way to turn it into kinetic energy is, of course, to put it into action.

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I posted some of these ideas on YouTube a few years ago, and now I've made a few changes in this audio supplement and added some follow-up comments to make it more complete. So this next is Epilogue, Part II.

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In response to a viewer question, I want to be clear about the distinction between the unity and indivisibility of the Oneness – the singularity of it, and what may be only our human experience of the duality of good (that which is and that which is not). At some point, both being effectively “good,” there is no longer a distinction between them, and we see what had been two as an original, indivisible One. While it may have been convenient to say these opposite goods are in superposition in the oneness, that felt duality of goodness may only be in us. I sometimes wonder about the original thought that may have inspired this Bible verse: “God hath spoke once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.”⁸¹

A second point comes from my often listening to the original video, where, a few times, I've glimpsed a fleeting wisp of spiritual perception, of an absolute and all-encompassing primal goodness – a coherent light of pervasive sparkling goodness – as if at the end of a tunnel, showing itself to be the Cause, the Principle, of all. I'm looking forward to seeing more of that. However, it does raise the question: if original, primal causation is unbounded, simultaneously inclusive and exclusive goodness, acting as one infinite divine Principle, what accounts for humanity's too often apparent, objective sense of the negative?

⁸¹ Ps 62:11.

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To begin with, it is useful to recognize that for us to frame that question means we have left the standpoint of reflecting on pure spiritual causation and are weighing the testimony of the often-unreliable human senses. Nevertheless, it is sometimes useful, to come up with an explanation, even if an admittedly flawed explanation, for the objective negative, if only to settle our thoughts. This need is encountered at every level of spiritual progress, and the explanations, thankfully, get more abstract as we progress.

Here is a thought-model I have found instructive. If you look in a concave mirror, from within its focal distance, you see yourself right-side up. If you move outside the focal distance, you appear to be upside down. The original “you” is still upright, but your image is now inverted. Outside the focal distance, you appear to be upside down; you appear inverted, even distorted; but you are, notwithstanding appearances, unchanged from your original upright self.

This model provides a metaphor to illustrate the fact that there is nothing wrong with primal causation, with spiritual reality as it comes direct from its Source. Where there is a problem, it is only from the vantage of an observer, viewing at a distance.

I’ve had experiences on an early morning walk, of seeing a squirrel sitting in the shadows, and when I got close, I saw that it was really just a clump of leaves. So where did the squirrel go? There was no squirrel. The squirrel was a creation of my mind based on insufficient information, simply a misperception formed in my mind. Some combination of *getting closer* and *more light* makes the misperception disappear.

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When you pray, it can enable you to get closer to God. When you get within the focal distance of the divine, you can sometimes glimpse the forever spiritual fact that everything was made well and remains well – you can sense the spiritual reality that everything is already alright. You can sometimes see that view where, “God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very (very) good.”⁸² Each such perception of that spiritual reality,⁸³ can uplift and improve the deep beliefs that frame the environment in which we live; and that can make all the difference.

And a final point offers some wider perspective for your consideration. If you can think of the affirmative statement, “I am God,” as an infinite presence, and the exclusionary statement, “There is none else,” as an infinite absence, you may be able to picture, spatially, how one can fit in the other – in oneness. The apparent duality of goodness – that which is, and that which is not – fit together in oneness – much like the consummation of a father and mother, resulting in a new conception of the idea of their oneness.

It is interesting that such patterns and principles are not unlike the Big Bang, where the immediate outcome is seen as two opposite goods. That is, it is good that there is an expanding space-time continuum, and it is also good that there is a dawn of light energy gradually emerging as substance. Those two

⁸² Gen 1:31. This Bible translation is a failure of understatement. I’ve caught a fleeting spiritual glimpse of this a few times, and it is not just *very good*. It is more like very-very-very good – stunning, breathtaking, sparkling, boundless, overflowing, indescribable, infinite forever good.

⁸³ MBE’s definition of “believing” includes, “... the perception of spiritual Truth.” *S&H*, p. 582:2.

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opposite goods, an expanse of place and a profusion of energy-substance, appear simultaneously from one creation event – one whole creation – as if a faint replication of the wholeness of the infinite God principle, I.



The main point of writing this book was to discuss the idea of what we might call the infinite negative, which ascends to an infinite sweet nothing and thence to pure goodness in indivisible in oneness. This may be a tough sell, but the idea is that evil is ultimately but the principle of its own nothingness.

I wanted to provide some examples of how this might be used in practice and even hint at its consequences in theology. I've only counted seven explicit references to this usage in the text: confusion, racism, tenderness, misfit, unprincipled, spite, and torture. There were four other brief mentions in demonstrations that involved handling crucifixion, severity, uncleanness, and terrorism, although I didn't describe how those were worked out, as they perhaps could not be explained as concisely as the others.

More than a century after MBE outlined the *modus operandi* for what she calls "the student's practice," the path to spiritual growth continues to evolve. Nevertheless, the basics remain unchanged.

From the Concordance to her writings, it looks like Mary Baker Eddy used the words *infinite spiritual* together only once in her published works. She writes, "He advances most in divine Science who meditates most on infinite spiritual substance and

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intelligence.”⁸⁴ When you cross the fourth river, so to speak, meditating on infinite spiritual substance and intelligence and following the unfoldments becomes a significant part of your thought life. In this spiritual attitude, or altitude, mastery of the infinite negative becomes indispensable, especially when you have realized the nothingness of some claim and find yourself boxing with a shadow. Resorting to and identifying with the wholeness of the infinite God-Principle may be the ultimate antidote.

⁸⁴ *MIS* 309:11-13

An Appreciation

I've recently been noticing the flow of fortuitous events in the emergence of the Christ idea, starting back with the patriarchs and prophets, leading to the remarkable confluence of events surrounding the life of Jesus, and continuing with the mission of Paul and the early Christians. While pondering this, some friends invited me to attend a musical production based on the Book of Ester. I'd once heard someone say that Ester was an interesting story but had little explicit spiritual content. While riding to see this show, one of my friends said, "It's about Providence."

The word providence comes from *provide*; and provide is made from *pro + videre* (to see), to see ahead or foresee. MBE writes, "What Deity *foreknows*, Deity must *foreordain*."⁸⁵ Putting a name to this, helps me recognize the unfolding spiritual provisions for mankind; one can more clearly see the hand of divine Providence in the overview of human affairs as God is working his purpose out.

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I've been in the habit of listening on my phone to MBE's writings and am struck by how she provides so many useful and accessible statements of God's laws of Truth to fill our spiritual tool kits and treasure chests. Part of what makes these powerful statements accessible is the way they are written; in fact, many are like prose poems. In her writings, she mentions that her preferred medium is poetry.⁸⁶ Consider the rhythm in the following:

⁸⁵ *Unity of Good*, p. 19:3

⁸⁶ *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 11:1, "From childhood I was a verse-maker. Poetry suited my emotions better than prose."

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“In Science man is the offspring of Spirit. The beautiful good and pure constitute his ancestry.”⁸⁷

“Man is not matter; he is not made up of brain, blood, bones and other material elements.”⁸⁸

“To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, today is big with blessings.”⁸⁹

I recently read that alliteration in classic poetry was typically a run of four first consonants across a line, and who but a 19th Century poet would write these lines:

“Meekly our Master met the mockery of his unrecognized grandeur.”⁹⁰

“Wisdom and Love may require many sacrifices of self to save us from sin.”⁹¹

“But the advance guard of progress has paid for the privilege of prayer the price of persecution.”⁹²

Not only has she communicated her vision of the spiritual science of being, but she has often done it in poetic prose, making it more accessible and memorable.

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They made a movie in 1997 from astronomer Carl Sagan’s book, “Contact,” where Jodie Foster’s character, an astronomer, is sent into deep space to meet intelligent life in a faraway galaxy.

⁸⁷ *S&H*, p. 63:5

⁸⁸ *S&H*, p. 465:6

⁸⁹ *S&H*, p. iiv:1

⁹⁰ *S&H*, p. 39:1

⁹¹ *S&H*, p. 23:1

⁹² *S&H*, p. 10:20

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Landing in a new world, she is met on a tropical beach by a man who appears to be her dear departed dad; but as they embrace in their first meeting she realizes his image is a representation from her memory. She says, “You’re not really my dad are you?” and he says, “No, but we thought this might make things easier for you.”

I’ve always liked that scene, because it reminds me of how we can be gently weaned from a finite sense of the divine. For example, Mrs. Eddy writes of how her understanding of God begins “first, as a loving Father and Mother; then, as thought ascends the scale of being to diviner consciousness, God becomes to me, as to the apostle who declared it, “God is Love,” – divine Principle ...”⁹³ She also refers to God in these interesting words: “This supreme potential Principle reigns in the realm of the real, and is ‘God with us,’ the I AM.”⁹⁴ Also interesting is this phrase where she refers to, “the infinite good that we name God.”⁹⁵ These references show a little of how we can be guided gently from our starting point to successively higher ideas of the divine.

I was reminded of that movie scene after beginning to see, empowered by a metaphor drawn from a short book by a Nobel laureate physicist, the coming together in oneness of the elements of goodness.⁹⁶ I’ve always been drawn to Bible

⁹³ MIS, p. 96:11

⁹⁴ MIS, p. 331:26

⁹⁵ MIS, p. 15:24

⁹⁶ Richard Feynman, “Six Easy Pieces,” p. 36: “One of the consequences (of quantum mechanics) is that things which we used to consider as waves also behave like particles, and particles behave like waves; in fact everything behaves the same way. There is no distinction between a wave and a particle. So quantum mechanics *unifies* the idea of the field and its waves, and the particles, all into one. [*His italics*]

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references to “the beauty of holiness,”⁹⁷ without quite knowing what that was. In this instance, I was working with some freshly discovered ideas and consciously reaching out for a higher idea of their oneness, intentionally trying to reach beyond where I had gone before. As I did this, as these ideas came together, I saw momentarily a vision of a transcendent spiritual science of the oneness of infinite good and its sublimity. It was a glimpse of the beauty of holiness. There was a fleeting moment where I just spontaneously blurted out to myself, “It’s so beautiful!”

That triggered in my mind another scene from the movie, the lines I most love, remembered from a quarter century ago. After a perilous journey through multiple dimensions of space, she looks out on a celestial event in breathless and reverent awe and, in the words of my remembrance, she says, “It’s so beautiful! They should have sent a poet. I didn’t know.”⁹⁸ I’ve always loved those lines, the awe of her recognition, in humility, that it would take more than words from the physical sciences to describe the grandeur in front of her – it would take a poet. When I first heard those movie lines, they reminded me of rare and cherished glimpses I’ve had from the spiritual realm.

~

Getting back to the beauty of holiness, my own silent exclamation, triggered those words of my recall from that movie, “It’s so beautiful, they should have sent a poet.” And then it all came together for me, lying in bed in the dark on the first

⁹⁷ *II Chronicles*, 20:21 (KJV)

⁹⁸ I recently rented “Contact,” the movie, and the actual words spoken by Jodie Foster, as I can make them out, were “No words, no words can describe it. Poetry. They should have sent a poet. So beautiful. So beautiful. I had no idea. I had no idea ...”

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morning of this new year, 2022. I realized that *they* did. I saw the connections, the hand of divine Providence, the prose poet, the beauty of holiness, those lines from the movie, and said to myself in awe, “They did, they did, they sent a poet.” Two hundred years ago, in July of 1821, little Mary Baker arrived. To describe the spiritual vision infinite, they sent us a poet, they did, they did.

I first drafted this when I couldn’t sleep, it so excited me. Afterward, as I was going back to sleep, around 5:00 AM, the closing lines of a hymn kept coming to me, and I’ve learned to follow up on those. I looked them up. They were to the familiar hymn: “God is working his purpose out.”