

**OLIVE GLEN ANNUAL MEETING 2020**  
**Talk by Peter Tyner, C.S.**  
**“And When He Came to Himself...”**  
***Purity, Innocence, and Expectancy***

Thank you Executive Board for inviting me to share my sense of God’s Word with you in this peaceful refuge, and with everyone connected to Olive Glen and of course, to share it with myself. Sharing Christ Truth with oneself is a comforting, healing balm, isn’t it? I talk Truth with myself all the time... and the truth is, I really need to hear it.

Everything starts with God, doesn’t it? We express God’s love because He first expressed us as His love. And we radiate that divine light of Love to “all that are in the house.” And Life is Light, says our Leader. And Light is everywhere throughout this pastoral campus where “Life most sweet as heart to heart speaks kindly,” and where the Christly unity of Christian Science nurse, patient, and staff is exactly where “the good purpose waits.”

I find Olive Glen to be an inspiring place, known spiritually but seen humanly for now. To me its floral grandness, its sacred mission and its continuous accomplishment enables (even accelerates) that blending of man’s heavenly inclined thoughts with God’s thoughts, thereby “lifting mankind above itself into purer desires...” Olive Glen is the spiritual Kingdom revealed tangibly, the practical outcome of Soul overflowing with do-ers who bring steadiness and steadfastness to every nook and cranny. And what do-ers you are!

The disciple James may have been thinking of you when he wrote “Be ye doers of the word...” The Christian Science nurses, staff and executive team at Olive Glen manifest exactly what Principle requires of its “doers.” The patients and residents are also doers because this facility is the action of the all-acting God, which doesn’t recognize a divide between the healers and the healed, the seekers and the finders. It is where all of us can “come to ourselves” and thus find liberation from every imprisoning belief.

You no doubt recognize that the title of this talk is from Luke’s gospel of the prodigal son. The phrase specifically describes the tipping point of the disgraced young man laboring vainly in the far, unilluminated reaches of his undisciplined mentality. He’s at the end of his rope, what can he do? Well, we who have read a page ahead already know what he did. He made a fundamentally better mental and moral choice than the dead-end he has been repeating thus far. But apparently it wasn’t easy for him. He had to **consent** to exchange what he knew about himself for what God knows about him. Hmmm. What might trigger his consent for that kind of radical exchange?

Knock, knock, knock.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock,” says Christ Jesus in the book of Revelation. Notice he **doesn’t** say “Behold I stand at the door and kick it in.” So, it is time, it is always time to open

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it gently and be patient with yourself, have expectancy without expectation. Mary Baker Eddy says in a letter to a student, “Soul waits for you.”

For Science to “go over the whole ground of error’s planting,” tearing out the deeply rooted suggestions of lust, remorse, selfishness, and unworthiness, otherwise known as animal magnetism, the young man must yield to his *intuition* and open the door. Mrs. Eddy states in Science and Health, “mortal mind must yield by its own consent.” Coming to oneself means we’re agreeing to what’s coming through that door -- something is destroyed, and something is redeemed.

It is noteworthy that both the Prodigal and Apostle Peter were each trained by an expert to know right from wrong, to know oneself as expressing original purity, innocence, and expectancy, though the Prodigal lad had temporarily lost sight of it by caving into overwhelming self-indulgence. Recall that the young man had been raised by a loving, gracious, and understanding father and those very qualities were his actual spiritual and mental underpinnings.

In Exodus God calls Himself I Am. Consider that name, I AM! Because I AM, **nothing else is** (or can be.) Because I AM there is absolute universal oneness unfolding itself as the divine creation, as spiritual man, as you. The marvelous Christian Science writer Doris Henty renders it this way-- God is the I, and Man is the Am. The opposite belief in dualism, or separation from God, makes it feel like things are happening **to** us, like a chronically bad haircut, non-stop abuse from a loved one or one major car expense after another. For some of us it’s like getting hit in the face with a cream pie over and over... so often we begin to expect it.

But the **truth is**, nothing can happen **to** you, because *you are what’s happening*. No suggestion of incoming darkness can survive the radiating, outbound light of reality which is your Christly selfhood. Be self-aware in Spirit and refuse to be the channel of insult, fear, or negative expectation. Nahum 1: verse 9 says “the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.”

Now let’s talk about the Apostle Peter.

He had his own moment of divine self-awareness, slightly different than the Prodigal son. Peter’s spiritual development occurred at the hands of the Master, and although his arrest and imprisonment came down on him like a ton of animal magnetism, he *could not be subjected to fear so intense that it would overcome his divine foundation*. That’s error’s illusory nature, you know, trying to appear real, larger and more powerful than your defenses. But the problem we seemingly face is never larger than our built-in divine solution.

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It is comforting to know that when the problem seems enormous, our innate resources are vast as God. It is why Christian Scientists can look at a counterfeit straight-away and declare with authority that it is not real. Oh, it may seem to be *there*, fearsomely looking at you, but it isn't real. Even if it claims to be you.

So anyway, Peter was in prison awaiting his death sentence to be carried out in the morning. It seems to me this countdown to a death belief was what the two men, Peter and the Prodigal had in common, as the disillusioned youth in the parable was probably on the brink of suicide. In Peter's case, by contrast, night prayers were made for the handcuffed apostle by his Christian colleagues. While he sat shackled with two heavy chains, guarded on both sides by armed soldiers, an angel told Peter to stand up and just boogie on out. As the guards slept, the shackles fell off. The angel then guided him through the labyrinth of prison corridors to the iron gate of the city, which opened by itself. Peter was now free, but slightly confused about what had just happened--was it real or an illusion? Only when he stepped outside the walls, his erroneous belief, did he recognize his rescue as God's angels at work. Scripture says, “And when Peter was come to himself he said, now I know for a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me...”

Now back to the wayward youth. As I consider the Prodigal story, the similarities to my own experiences jump right out at me. I too was in my late 20s, alone, washed up, spiritually bankrupt, angry, confused, and empty of ideas on how to fix myself. Frankly, I really didn't want to fix myself, because obtaining a better version of my own corruption wasn't very appealing.

I found myself standing outside the window of a Christian Science Reading Room in Hollywood. I had been raised in Science back in Ohio but abandoned it after high school. Soon after that I was in the “waste howling wilderness” where I spent ten years feeding the proverbial hogs.

“Don't go in,” warned personal sense as I looked at the display of open books through the window. “You'll be wasting your time all over again.” So, as I stood there foolishly debating the devil, the words of the still small voice also thundered relentlessly in my thought, “Wilt thou be made whole?” I said, “Certainly not if it means giving up my independence!” Then spiritual sense said, “You dear boy, Truth will make you free; it's slavery you'll be giving up!” So, I decided to give God another chance, and went in. The truth is, 52 years later I'm still there, still exchanging what I know about myself for what God knows about me. Discipline, I discovered, is freedom.

Yielding myself to the Word of God has helped me align my affections with our Father-Mother Love; it has inspired me to navigate from human aimlessness to Christly fulfillment, and

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from confusion to clarity. This then is true for both the Prodigal **and** me because our stories are really *morality tales* unveiling what Mary Baker Eddy calls “Spiritual Sense, the conscious, constant capacity to understand God.” **It is by means of this Spiritual Sense, or divine self-awareness, we know and love God, our self, and our neighbor**, which Jesus commanded as our first and only duty.

On page 298 of Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures our Leader lays it out this way --“Spiritual sense, contradicting material sense, involves Intuition, Hope, Faith, Understanding, Fruition, Reality.” Almost sounds like steps of a path, doesn’t it?

The parable of the Prodigal is loaded with symbolism reflecting the eternal attraction of personal sense to its own hell. In context of early Israel, it also reveals the cultural and religious influences of that period. For example, swine were illegal for Jews to own or raise but there *he* was in a foreign country feeding pigs after shaming his family and acquiring the reputation of a sucker and a loser.

He had not only squandered his inheritance but dishonored his Father’s name. And worse, he had rejected the tenets of his nation’s hard-won religion, the world’s only faith which worshiped the one Almighty God. Could he have sunk any lower in this personal cesspool sense of self?

For this story to have the life-changing power Jesus intended, we should note the Prodigal, though broke and depressed, nonetheless possessed *innate* Spiritual Sense (angelic Intuition) in his selfhood which pointed to an ever-present, lively hope. No matter how thick the mist of mortal mind obscured his view of himself, he had enough spiritual sense to “come to himself.” In his case it took the suffering of personal sense to bring him to that point of surrender, didn’t it? “By suffering or by Science,” says Mrs. Eddy. Could this experience also illustrate our Leader’s assertion that “by reversal, error serves as waymarks to the one Mind.”

The inevitable reconciliation of the human and divine is always going on, right? MBE talks about “man’s normal drift toward the one Mind...” Consider the human and the divine coincidence, Jesus and the Christ, you and your divine identity. As noted, the human is redeemable into the divine, but the mortal hasn’t any eventuality except nothingness.

Nothingness was the original mental void mentioned in Genesis, a state of unformed thoughts which changed when the “Spirit of God moved upon the waters [of mortal mind].” And the next verse says, “... and there was light.”

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Page 513 of our textbook says “Advancing spiritual steps in the teeming universe of Mind lead on to spiritual spheres and exalted beings. To material sense this divine universe is dim and distant, gray in the somber hues of twilight. But anon the veil is lifted, and the scene shifts into light.” Same scene, new light.

Here are the words again. **Intuition, Hope, Faith, Understanding, Fruition, Reality.** Keep them in mind as we look even more closely at this parable.

And when he came to himself. These words have to be among the most important in the entire Bible. The Prodigal no longer self-identified as a “dead man walking,” he re-opened his thought to the possibility that maybe he *could* go home. That’s intuition, isn’t it?

Then the boy thought, maybe he *could* go back home but only as a hired hand. Perhaps he rationalized the Psalm, “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.” That’s hope.

So, he turned away from his contraband squalor and took the first step in the direction of his Father’s estate-- That’s faith!

... and the father saw him “a long way off” and immediately ran to him, hugged him, forgave him, and restored his place in the family. “In my father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.” That’s fruition.

Once home it was as though the lad had never left. The 23d Psalm was realized, “He restoreth my soul, my cup runneth over.” And that’s reality.

You know, you can take those *six words* and apply them to any problem or situation you’ll ever encounter, because your spiritual Intuition, your communicating angel, the first step, is greenlighting you to go forward with the other five.

“Bloom where you are planted,” says my church friend. The Christ finds us exactly where we are, the way we are, warts and all, and all we **have** to do is turn from the mortal miasma and take that first step toward the “secret place of the most High,” and our Father is there immediately. Our Leader says on P 327 of the textbook, “The way to escape the misery of sin is to cease sinning. There is no other way.”

But let us not overlook another important actor in the parable-- The older brother. A Christian Science writer once opined that the whole prodigal parable is really about the older son. He was outraged when his sibling was “received again with joy.” He took offense that the younger brother, after wasting his inheritance, had everything restored.

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Maybe he thought being the younger son was easy... party hearty for a few years on someone else's money, find yourself in the predictable ditch without hope, then return to your original meal ticket without any consequences. That rumination of the older brother really stoked the fires of his bitterness, didn't it?

As well, the older son obviously resented the extra burden of work that had befallen him, questioned his father's integrity in allowing the boy to leave in the first place, and thus hardened his heart against the brother.

The father went to his elder son and explained that salvation was the important thing. We'll always be together, he said, and everything that I have is yours...

Then the story stops there; Jesus offered no denouement to the lesson. He leaves it with you and me to finish the story. We're the older brother now and there's much to do. I found out the hard way that taking offence is the beginning of animal magnetism's joy ride at your expense.

Have you taken offense lately? Let it go. Love the offender, destroy the offense which hangs on mentally, and forgive, forgive, forgive seventy times seven. I discovered *that* to be *practical* healing advice. You see, I used to get hit with severe colds and sometimes flu just about every year. About 5 years ago my wife saw me beginning to cough and sneeze, and she reminded me of some minor offense I had taken a few days earlier. It had to do with a family slight, which is so noticeable to personal sense. And this perceived offense got more inflamed after a few days of mental incubation. Our Leader says on page 430, “the patient ruminates...”

So, I thought about what my wife had pointed out. My first impulse was to take offence all over again and to re-justify my internal reaction involving the family member. In a moment I saw the connection between this *far-country* style of reacting, and my coming down with a nasty cold. Love was knocking at my door and now I rushed to open it. What a great decision! Feeling better immediately, I was compelled to laugh out loud. Well, that error had now been exposed and it was indeed the end of the so-called cold. We still remind one another when and if the occasion arises, Don't Take Offense!

So, the older brother who took great offense would just have to “come to himself” when his mentality wearied of rehearsing unfair treatment and self-righteousness. Ever-present spiritual intuition would kick in whenever the man was ready. Love flows down the lines of least resistance, doesn't it? And that day will surely come because he had a blessed father, and Revelation tells us every knee shall bow. I think of Mrs. Eddy's line in her letter, “Soul waits for you.”

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Here is a different issue. Let us say that someone we hold dear is no longer interested in Christian Science. Or maybe they never were. You might think “Oh no! This is not the time to walk away from Science.” Not to worry, they are forever spiritually identified as sons and daughters by Father Mother God and will inevitably come to themselves.

So quit grumbling that *it isn't happening on your timetable*. Who made this about you? Just love them where they are for now. Didn't someone love you when you were more or less unlovable? A line in hymn 237 reads, “He hath promised we shall find him, Love divine its promise keeps...” *God promises we shall find Him...* that authentic promise implies Intuition which assuredly leads to the promise of Reality. And it includes every step the dear ones in the far country want and need.

It is easier to postpone “coming to yourself” if you continue to accept material circumstances as real. The matter viewpoint not only divides from God, it splits us from one another. It rationalizes separation between everything in the creation, right down to the cells, molecules, and atoms of our own so-called material bodies. These material tidbits seemed to be there from “the beginning,” but research scientists using their powerful microscopes are finding, not atoms of matter, but only tiny energy fields. That changes everything in physical science, doesn't it?

Christ Jesus and the prophets have always seen right through the illusion of matter. Mrs. Eddy says, “matter disappears under the microscope of Spirit.” Therefore, matter isn't what we're looking at, it's an inferior way of seeing what's really there.

Most people succumb to the myth of universal separation, at least for a while. Like the Prodigal, most of us seem to be in the far country to one degree or another in that mistaken sense, but that said, all of us are in the normal drift toward the one Mind. So, it figures that when the normal drift toward the one Mind overtakes the human mind's resistance, the veil lifts proportionately; matter and its accusations of separate-ness, disease, and limitation begin to dissolve, and true progress unfolds.

“There is a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness,” prophesied Isaiah. I believe he was reflecting on Intuition, Hope, Faith, Understanding, Fruition, and Reality. Think about this-- every individual in this meeting is mentally present in those six interconnected proofs of thought. Become aware of them, identity them, consider their inherent power to realign your human thought with your Kingdom of Heaven within.

Our trusted way to the heavenly kingdom\_within is purity, innocence, and expectancy, **demonstrated**. Demonstrated by whom? Me? You? The practitioner? The Prodigal demonstrated

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nothing-- yet yielding to his angelic intuition led to his complete restoration. Contrary to popular metaphysical vocabulary, we don't really demonstrate anything, do we? But Love demonstrates us as its own purity. And in return our love for God and man shows up as progress on the human highway. So, is it a straight and narrow road to salvation? Well, there are still stones to be gathered out of the way. But then just as you feel the stones are being handled in your own journey spirit ward, here comes a pandemic!

Pandemic, what a word. Turns out, *Pan* signifies all, and *demic* is derived from *Demos*, a Greek word meaning people. *All people*. Each individual must be intuitively seen by you and by me as the pure self-aware image of God. True self-awareness knows no walls, barriers, or sense of unworthiness. “For He is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us...” says St. Paul.

That precious phrase from Ephesians points out the mythical gap between our human sense of identity and our eternal Christly selfhood. And we are always closing the gap by intuitively understanding there is no gap, and never was. The Christ is our substance and our purpose, our customized selfhood, the unique Kingdom of Heaven within. Your growing apprehension of this truth IS the breaking down of that so-called middle wall of partition between us, between Mortal mind's inferior view of itself and you, the Christly presentation.

Paul in 2d Cor says, “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” No middle wall there. The glory of God reflected in a “glass” is purity beholding itself. My Sunday School teacher used to tell us, “Your consciousness is a window, and Christ is the Windex.”

This pandemic we've been through is not leaving us where it found us. Not by a country mile. Reports say that the courtesy, decency, patience, and grace expressed by one to another is the most evident social change witnessed in decades. Education is being permanently restructured for the better. Employment is taking on novel, productive and creative dimensions and employers are becoming more woven into the community fabric. Families, churches, schools, every aspect of life is growing in more natural directions. Almost all the changes are technology-driven (AKA Mind manifested), the action of the all-acting God enabling man to do more with less.

We are always growing. You're not the same person you were last year, last month, yesterday or even when you awakened this morning. It is because of “man's normal drift toward the one Mind.” The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, “A man cannot step into the same river twice; for it is not the same river, and he is not the same man.”



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Can an entire nation or its people “come to themselves?” Many ethical scholars believe the United States was really born, not in 1776 but in 1866, soon after the Civil War ended. That conflict resulted in fundamental Constitutional principles becoming the law in every part of the nation, and slavery was made illegal. It was also the year Christian Science was discovered by Mary Baker Eddy which revealed *God’s standard of divine law everywhere and forbade mental slavery*. Some might call that a coincidence.

Once again mankind harnessed this heavenly light and grew spiritually and therefore humanly at a rate never seen in history. Think of it--In a bit less than 70 years, we as a nation went from dependence on horses to walking on the moon, from subsistence farming to feeding the world. Your smart phone has many times more compute power than the entire space program had in 1969. What half-century in all human history has produced progress on that scale?

How many other blessed transformations have happened since 1866? The industrial and agricultural revolution, the introduction of divine metaphysics, global victory over evil dictatorships, the information age, the digital science revolution, and space exploration. More with less means resolving things into thoughts.

Think again of the six stages of spiritual sense, **Intuition, Hope, Faith, Understanding, Fruition, Reality**. When Mrs. Eddy discovered the laws of Life, Truth and Love, women were not allowed to own the clothes on their back! She prayed for the *Reign of Truth, Life and Love* and it manifested itself as fair government. Women’s suffrage soon became normal and universal in the United States.

In the transcendental Christianity of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Walt Whitman, and Mary Baker Eddy we see more God-like love for others, reverence for qualities over quantities, and gentle tolerance manifested toward all things great and small. The dividends generated by the on-going revolution of Christian Science thought are profound—such as social and political stability, physical and mental healing, wide-spread wealth distribution, and free public education to name a few. Now these ideals are being felt all over the world. “On earth as it is in Heaven” has just begun.

We are grateful for advancement but always mindful that it is the Science of the Christ which underlies all progress.

The viewpoint determines the view. We feel the effect of that enlarged viewpoint given to us by Mrs. Eddy, and the new view it brings. It is Hope. Not the same hope someone might harbor about a lotto ticket, a mortgage application or a harmonious family visit but hope as the

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faint recognition that all good may already be yours. The hope of the seed planted in 1776, harvested in 1866 and distributed by a free printing press over the next 150 years expresses unstoppable divine Mind and its divinely tangible ideas.

Philippians says, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” That includes God’s Word as revealed in our Pastor, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, and the Bible. We are not going to let divine science become a stack of dusty books and religious texts that our aunts and grandmothers used to read.

Is Christian Science headed for the ecclesiastical ash heap, driven out by natural science and aggressive moral secularism? I hear that argument all the time. But we don’t buy into that animal magnetism! The Psalmist tells us to “enlarge the place of thy tent!” To those who decry the shrinkage of our churches, Sunday Schools and Reading Rooms-- have you looked at the sweeping progress of Christian Science in Africa and other emerging countries? Or have you checked out the legitimate websites devoted to Christian Science, including our own Mother Church sites? I occasionally visit a Facebook site called “Christian Scientists” which claims over 7200 serious, qualified, and mainly youthful members. Or google *Christian Science Churches in Southern California* and get a load of their multiple podcast lectures and other energetic outreach.

You know, the divine Word which starts in Genesis gains individuality and identity throughout the Bible. What are we expecting to witness in this mental journey of identification? Jesus asked, “What went ye out for to see?” The answer needs to be “Christ Science.”

MBE says Science must go over the whole ground and dig up every seed of error’s sowing. Science does that job, not you or me. We are not responsible for mortal mind, we’re only responsible for not believing it.

When we come to ourselves, we also find others. As we insist on our (and others’) Christliness, we probably need a strong measure of the Jesus characteristic too. What would he say to someone struggling with issues of mortal life, so called? Would he not say "I love you just exactly where you are? And I will walk with you and talk with you above earth's troubled angry sea. I will know you as God's own even when you decide on surgery. Or take up smoking. Or drinking. Or drug use. Or when you deny me out of convenience or self-preservation. I love you even when you are off put by your sinning brother or sister, son, or daughter. I see you in the Sycamore tree moments after you embezzled the tax money and love the hell right out of you. I will visit your house today. I know who you are and who I AM. I am waiting for you to come down from the tree and emulate me, then go out and do the same for others and return with joy that the devils are subject unto you."

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Six takeaways from our talk today.

Feel **intuitively** that God’s heavenly kingdom is here and nigh.

Feel the **hope** that His kingdom includes you and yours and all.

Have the **faith** that like Peter, you have climbed out of the boat and are now walking above the raging sea toward the Christ. Keep your eyes on him, don’t look down.

**Understand** that Divine Science is not a philosophy or religious mystery, but it is God’s Law, the only Science there is, and you can make demands on it just like you can make demands on the law of mathematics.

Every bit of good you *witness, think or do* exists as the **fruition** of God’s presence.

Accepting yourself and others as emanations of divine light each imbued with spiritual sense, or self-awareness, is to conscientiously exist as God’s unfoldment of Himself. That’s **Reality**.

So, as the sweet reminiscences of your own unfolding journey from Intuition to Reality come gently to mind, maybe you will recall that moment “when you came to yourself,” how obedient you were in answering Christ’s knock at your door, and how transforming it was when you opened it, and found that His love for you is all there is to you. What a homecoming!

**END**