

Prolog

There are seemingly immutable laws of physics which, in our normal experience, might appear to govern all cause and effect in this world. Most people believe that these laws are the whole story – everything that happens can be fully explained by combinations of simple laws of action and reaction. But, in looking back at my life from a perspective gained through painful experience and the passage of considerable time, I have become absolutely convinced that this is not always the case. I believe that there is a God who is sometimes forced to suspend the laws of physics and intervene to protect us from events or human intentions which would have consequences for us that are outside of his will. Since these divine interventions into the events of this world don't conform to our expectations, we call them miracles.

Most people do not believe in miracles because they believe they have never seen one. I say, almost everyone has witnessed miracles but, their mind, filtering events through a prejudice against the miraculous, have simply failed to see and recognize them. Even when a person recognizes that something has happened that is highly unusual, it is almost always attributed to chance – an accident of nature with no intelligent intention behind it.

This book is a sequence of short stories which record incidents in my life which were obvious acts of miraculous, divine intervention. My memories of these interventions have become the cornerstone of my faith in a loving, all powerful, all knowing God who does not leave us totally at the mercy of unfeeling chance, but who carefully watches over us like a loving father. It is my fervent prayer that the true stories presented within these pages will motivate you, my dear reader, to carefully examine your own life for unusual events that can be called miracles. In so doing, you will begin to recognize the moments when our loving God intervened to change the course of your life. As you begin to see the miracles which reveal the hand guiding your own life, do as I do and share these stories with others as often as you have opportunity to do so. In doing so, the knowledge of God is increased and the world becomes a little bit better place for all of us to live.

Chapter 1: An Early Childhood Miracle

Early childhood - a time of blissful oblivion when everything is new and exciting, and one is oblivious to danger, to the needs of others, to politics, to the passage of time, to the various spirit worlds which surround us, and to the existence and workings of God. Sometimes I yearn to return to such a simple life where I only had to concern myself with my own needs and when someone older and wiser provided for me and watched over me to keep me safe. Sadly, at my age, I realize that such a life can only be found in a nursing home – a place I would rather not be.

Unfortunately, I was oblivious to what was happening around me through those formative years so I am able to recall but one such incident from that time with sufficient clarity to be able to record it herein. What follows is a true story, told as it happened; a recounting of one of the many times God did something for me that violated what we know of the laws of physics to prevent me from reaping the consequences of my foolish actions. An act of love and grace we would call a miracle.

It was summer vacation, sometime in the mid 1950s, school was out and my best friend and I were bored and looking for adventure. Young boys and boredom, as we all know, are a recipe for pain, trouble, and opportunities to learn from our mistakes. This incident, the spawn of boredom and poor judgment, was no exception.

I lived with my family in a quiet, middle-class neighborhood which had very little traffic and numerous other young families with young children. I had a friend, the other actor in this story whom we shall call Joe. I'm sure Joe wasn't his real name but we will call him that because, as I write this some sixty years later, his real name has escaped my memory. Joe was about my age but differed from me in that he seemed to have little fear of the consequences of disobeying his parents. His knack for persuading others to do foolish things and his unnatural fearlessness always made me a little uneasy around him. Several times that summer he and I had gotten into trouble because I had let him talk me into doing something that I would not have thought of, or dared to do, had I been on my own. I'm not trying to blame Joe for the trouble I often found myself in, I was just as guilty as Joe for failing to listen to my parents and my own conscience.

For some infraction I can no longer recall, probably some forbidden trek of discovery among the often empty (and mostly unpaved) streets of our immediate neighborhood, my friend had been grounded from his bicycle on this particular day. His parents had condemned him to solitary confinement within the boundaries of his own back yard. Bored myself, and not wanting to let Joe suffer his incarceration in solitude, I joined him in his prison yard to see what kind of fun we could cook up together.

We entertained ourselves for a while with harmless activities such as foot races, playing catch, and tearing our bikes apart to see how they worked. We soon became bored with those innocent activities. Craving adventure and bolstered by the knowledge that his mom was probably taking a nap, we sneaked out the back yard gate to explore the railroad tracks which lay only a few yards beyond the boundaries of his parents property.

Joe had a few pennies left over from his allowance and proceeded to show me how to lay them on the track just right so that the train would run over them and squish them until they were really thin and as big around as a quarter. About the time the third penny was placed in just the right spot on the track, his mother caught sight of us and came running out of the house proclaiming for all the neighbors to hear that death, gross dismemberment, or spankings would befall us if we didn't immediately remove ourselves from the proximity of the train tracks. Fearing a beating, or another embarrassing

conversation between my parents and Joe's, we voluntarily consigned ourselves again to confinement in the back yard prison.

Once the threat of the angry adult had passed, we again sank into the stupor of deep boredom. After a few minutes of playing catch with a baseball, Joe pitched the ball into some bushes and headed for the house. He didn't say where he was going - I thought he probably had to visit the bathroom. He returned shortly thereafter concealing something under his shirt and looking like he had just gotten away with some major crime. Despite the emotional numbness arising from near-terminal boredom, a sense of dread overtook me when I saw the mischievous look on his face. Some sixth sense seemed to be warning me that his mother was going to kill us for whatever Joe was up to.

Looking around to be sure the parent police weren't watching, Joe lifted his shirt and showed me his ill-gotten bounty; a large, apparently very sharp, kitchen knife.

I looked at him with a scowl of disapproval on my face and whispered, "what are you doing with that?"

Again, looking around to be sure no one was watching, he asked, "you know how to play mumbly peg?"

I shook my head and asked, "whats that?"

"I'll show you," he answered, "it's fun." He pointed to a spot about 10 feet from where we were standing and ordered, "you go stand over there."

I did as he requested then turned to face him.

"Now," Joe said, "what you do is throw the knife so it sticks in the ground as close to the other guy as you can without sticking him with it." "If the other guy chickens out and moves, you win."

I nodded slowly indicating to him that I now understood the rules of the game. I was also sporting a fake smile to let him know I was thinking this looked like fun, but, though I didn't let it show on my face, I was still quite uneasy and somehow knew this was going to end badly.

My friend looked around again for spoil sports, looked me in the eye and said, "my turn, here it comes." He gripped the shiny steel blade by the tip, raised his hand above his shoulder and flung the knife in my direction. It landed handle-first several feet to my right and went skidding through the grass. Joe muttered something I couldn't quite hear.

I quickly found the knife because the grass had been cut so short that the black handle and shiny blade were easy to see in it. I carefully picked up the knife and returned to my assigned gaming position. I was nervous about throwing the blade overhanded as he had done, so I gently gripped the knife by the handle and tossed it toward my friend with an underhanded pitch - like a softball pitcher. The knife fell on its side on the ground about a yard short of Joe's toes.

Joe smiled then rolled his eyes and said, "You throw like a girl, throw it like this!" Again he lobbed the knife in my direction using an overhanded pitching technique and with considerably more force than his previous throw. Again, the knife struck the ground about a yard to my right, but this time it hit blade-first and stuck in the ground. Joe swore again.

I retrieved the knife and returned to my throwing position. I didn't want to be called a girl again, so I decided I would try throwing the knife like he had. I swallowed my fear of the sharp edge and gripped the cold steel blade by its tip. I raised my throwing hand above my shoulder and let fly. The knife stuck into the ground only a few inches short of Joe's left foot. He flinched and almost moved his foot to avoid the blade.

Now my friend was obviously upset. The student had proven himself (by sheer dumb luck) to be better than his teacher. He raised the knife to throw it. His eyes narrowed in concentration as he willed the blade to hit its mark as close to me as possible. Joe was not what one would call a graceful loser – I knew he would do whatever it took to beat me at this game. His arm arced back over his right shoulder then flew forward with considerable speed and force. The knife cut quickly through the air directly toward my face. When the spinning blade was about half way between us, Joe shouted “look out!”

I saw the repeated glint of reflected sunlight as the blade spun end over end on a trajectory that looked like it would end somewhere on my upper body. I heard Joe's warning and threw my arms over my face to fend off the approaching blade. I was frozen with fear, my feet wouldn't move. I fully expected to be impaled by the sharp blade at any moment. Seconds passed and nothing happened.

I still had my face covered with my arms waiting for the impact when Joe's voice broke my fear-induced paralysis. He said, “where'd it go?”

I lowered my arms to look around and said “what do you mean?”

Joe answered, “What happened to the knife?” He stood looking in my direction with his hand shading his eyes and a look of confusion on his face. He said “it disappeared”.

“What disappeared?” I asked, “where'd the knife go?”

“The knife” he said. “It just went away”. “it was coming right at you and it just went away!”

I said “maybe the sun was in your eyes”.

Joe said “no! The sun isn't in my eyes, it just went away!”

He looked at me with a scowl that said he couldn't believe I wasn't listening to what he was saying.

I started to ask him again which way it went when suddenly Joe's scowl was replaced with a look of wide-eyed panic. With a noticeable tremor in his voice he exclaimed, “If we don't find that knife, my mom will kill us!”

I turned to look behind me to see if I could see the knife; I couldn't.

Running toward me now he said again “we gotta find that knife!”.

Both of us dropped to our knees in the short grass and began scouring the ten feet or so of yard between my position and the neighbor's fence. We ran our fingers through the grass looking for the knife until our fingers were sore, but we found no trace of it.

We both went back to where we had been standing and re-enacted the scene to try to get a better idea

where the knife could have gone.

After several minutes I said “I thought you said it went away”.

He looked at me and said “I dunno. I think it did. It looked like it just disappeared”. “If it didn't, we gotta find it before my mom finds out”.

We thoroughly searched his yard, then jumped the fence and just as thoroughly searched the neighbor's yard. The knife was nowhere to be found.

My mother's voice calling me home for supper ended our frantic search and I left Joe standing there in his back yard. As I left his yard I turned to look a him. He was standing motionless staring into the neighbors' back yard with a pale blank look of resignation to impending doom.

Unfortunately for Joe, neither I nor Joe, nor his mother, ever saw that knife again.

Chapter 2: The Baseball Incident

Baseball - it's an integral part of our American culture. Young Americans just seem to naturally gravitate toward it like flies to watermelon. I was no exception. But, unlike many of the youngsters in our neighborhood in 1956, I knew I wasn't very good at it and so held no aspiration of becoming a professional ball player.

Even at that early age, science and all things electrical held my attention more tenaciously than sports of any kind. That was partly due to my physical makeup; tall, skinny, and clumsy - and partly due to my father's work with computers.

Even though science was my first love, I still enjoyed an occasional game of baseball and so readily agreed when my mother suggested that I might enjoy playing ball with a little league team. The games were usually fun and the coaches taught me a lot about the game I would never have learned otherwise. Even though I usually found myself stuck in the outfield; bored, and waiting for fly balls that never came my way, I stuck with it through the season and did my best to support my team.

This particular hot summer day, I was allowed to play second base. It was my first time on second base and I was determined that I was going to do a good job of it so I could maybe have a chance to do it again. Second base was a lot more exciting than the outfield and I knew my parents would be proud of me if I could attain and keep such a lofty position in the baseball hierarchy.

It was a late afternoon game. The sun was hot and was shining directly in my eyes through the chain-link backstop. The sun, and the sweat running down my forehead into my eyes, made it difficult for me to see the action at home plate.

As I stood squinting into the glaring sun trying to be a part of the action instead of just a casual observer, my nose suddenly began to itch - not a minor itch I could have ignored, but a major league itch that completely distracted me from what I was doing. The pitcher was just standing on the mound staring at the batter so I thought I probably had time before the pitch to do something about my itchy nose. I raised my right hand and started to scratch my nose with the buckle on the back of my glove. I couldn't see anything that was happening in front of me because the glove blocked my view. While I was blinded by the ball glove, I heard a loud cracking sound, then something hit the other side of my glove hard enough to bloody my nose.

I was so stunned by the blow I wasn't totally aware of what was happening but I remember hearing people in the bleachers clapping, whistling, and yelling "good stop DeHaven." After a few seconds of confusion, I realized that the baseball had been hit hard by the batter and that it had slammed into my upraised ball glove driving the back of my hand hard into my nose. The bleeding wasn't serious and soon stopped so I was able to remain on second base and complete the game.

Following the game, coach told me two things I never forgot. First, that by stopping that ball so the short stop could pick it up and throw the runner out at first base, I had prevented what would have been the game's only home run. And, secondly, having seen exactly what had transpired out there on second base, he told me that when I said my prayers that night I should thank God for making my nose itch because, with the sun in my eyes, I would probably have not seen that ball before it hit me. It would have struck me square in the nose and probably caused some serious brain damage - or worse.

Chapter 3: The Dry Years

The period from 1957 to 1962 was, for me, rather uneventful spiritually. I'm sure from my present vantage point looking back over my life and seeing the number of times God had to save me from danger, that there were most likely times during this period of clumsy adolescence that He had to step in and quietly protect and guide me. I just wasn't paying attention to such things then and so was not aware of Him or what He was doing in my life. I had vivid memories then of the incidents with the disappearing knife and the itchy nose that saved me from a speeding baseball, but I had no sense of God's presence, no personal relationship with Him and only a slight mental ascent to his existence.

My mother, bless her heart, tried to lead me to belief in God as best she could. It brings to mind that old adage about leading a horse to water. You know the horse needs water, you can lead him to where he can reach out and take it, but you just can't, no matter how you poke, prod and plead, make him drink.

My father was not saved at that time and so mom and I only went to church sporadically; probably partly because my behavior in public was less than acceptable and she was trying to put a bit of social polish on me.

In the late 1950s my parents decided that we would all be better off living in the country away from the noise and temptations of the city. We bought a ten-acre plot of land and proceeded to clear it of weeds, build a house, and plant a huge garden. I must say, it was one of the best things my folks ever did for us kids. We developed a decent work ethic while caring for 4-H animals and working in our large garden. We gained valuable skills by helping to build the house, and learned to appreciate the soil, the weather, and the living things that depended upon them. Due to our parent's dedication to our development, we never found ourselves short of activities to occupy our time, build our bodies, and sharpen our minds. There were music lessons, school activities, 4-H club events, animals to care for, horses to ride and trips to the library in town to gather literature to sharpen our minds and entertain us. My favorite subject was radio and electronics. I will always be thankful for the sacrifices my parents made then that made us all who we are today.

I had begun to develop an interest in electronics before we moved to the country but books in the library about radio and electronics were few, and this was well before the Internet existed. For a couple of years I learned what I could by dismantling discarded electronic wonders which I dragged home from the neighbor's trash cans and from trips with my dad to the city dump. I would attempt to construct electronic circuits I thought would be fun to own by assembling parts scavenged from my electronic dump treasures. My knowledge of radio and electronics was very limited and most of what I thought I knew was wrong so almost nothing I built worked. It was frustrating. I yearned for access to the knowledge I needed to build electronics that actually worked; I just didn't know where to obtain it.

My electronics education got a major boost when a friend of the family cleaned out her college-bound son's room and brought me numerous boxes filled with his discarded electronics magazines, text books, and miscellaneous radio parts. I poured over those magazines and books as if my life depended upon it. I was like a starving man suddenly given a bucket of fried chicken. It was one of the happiest and most productive periods of my life.

As I read and learned and scrounged for parts to reproduce circuits described in those books and magazines, I enjoyed many hours enthralled by the magic of electronics and gained knowledge that became the foundation of a rewarding career in electronics technology. I, and my family who benefited from my steady and rewarding employment in the electronics industry, will always be grateful for that

gift. Come to think of it, maybe that period of my life wasn't so spiritually uneventful after all. God had to have had a hand in arranging that wonderful gift. He saw my need, and filled it abundantly.

Another benefit of our transition to country living was Christian neighbors who invited us to visit the little country church a few miles from our house. We tried it, liked it, and soon were all attending regularly. My father and I, and most of my siblings, joined the church by professing our belief in Jesus as the Son of God and being baptized. Mom was already a member of this denomination and had professed her faith in Christ and been baptized at an early age. Unfortunately, for me anyway, the transformation didn't go deep enough to really change my life. I developed a head knowledge of who Jesus is and about his relationship to God the Father, but at the time, there was no real sense or evidence of a personal relationship with the living God. My personal spiritual life was quite shallow, self-centered, and ineffective.

My relationship with Christ then was quite shallow, but it was a good start toward what would later become a more rewarding spiritual life. Now, I am certain that even that shallow relationship with Christ saved me later in life from spiritual influences dead set on my destruction; a story I will relate to you in the next few chapters. I am today very grateful for my parent's insistence on my involvement in church, youth group and church camps and for the personal and spiritual growth I experienced there.

Chapter 4: High School

High school was a difficult time for me. I was a country boy, socially awkward and inexperienced. I was liked well enough by most students and tried to be friendly to people, but I was odd. My interests differed dramatically from those of most of my acquaintances and most of the other students avoided me because of it.

I didn't want for things to do. I was active in 4-H with my electric projects, cows, pigs and crops, and I always had some science book to read or electronics project to work on. In spite of mediocre grades and little interest in academic success, I developed a strong sense that I was intellectually superior to most of my peers. My understanding of electronics and a string of successes, and subsequent awards, in my electronics and public speaking 4-H projects had a lot to do with that.

I kept to myself and a small band of boys with similar interests and avoided the dances, sports, carousing, and drinking parties that seemed to hold the attention of most other high school students. I longed to know the secrets of photosynthesis so I could use it to help feed the starving. Most of the others seemed only to be interested in their social standing among their peers. I was seen by them as a socially immature nerd; which I was. I can see now that if it were not for the church and 4-H club activities my parents insisted I pursue, I would have been considerably more socially inept than I was.

I attended church regularly. I had gone through the motions of publicly stating that I believed that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. I was baptized, and actively participated in church activities, but it was all an act to please my elders. It was what was expected of me. I had never been taught, or maybe I hadn't listened to my elders so the concept had never occurred to me, that it was possible to have a personal relationship with God. God and Jesus seemed distant from me; way off in Heaven somewhere only occasionally peaking over the edge to see what kind of trouble I was getting into. It never occurred to me that God was always very close to me and was always aware of my situation and my needs. My becoming a Christian at the age of twelve did little, if anything, to change me or the course of my life. At least, I didn't think so at the time.

My spiritual struggles began in high school where I had access to a library full of books such as "The Ascent of Man" and "Origin of Species" by Darwin. The science was good in these books and they taught me much about critical thinking and the importance of the scientific method with its rigorous proofs and peer reviews that keep us from promulgating, or falling victim to, false beliefs. There were few references however in any of those books to a creator and about how He fit into the picture. In those days, you were either a scientist, or a believer. Few were the authors who had the courage to try to reconcile the two world views.

Immersion in the works of mostly atheistic scientists coupled with my own shallow spirituality, soon lead me into the belief that God, spirits, and things spiritual were figments of people's uneducated imaginations; myths concocted to explain the seemingly unexplained. Though I didn't dare profess it to my peers or parents, I began to see the world through the eyes of an atheist. I believed that science was man's only hope, and that if something couldn't be directly observed by everyone and supported by scientific proofs, it didn't exist.

By the time I graduated from high school, I had formulated a plan for my life and had begun working to bring it to fruition. I was going to earn an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering at a local university. Then, taking advantage of the scholarships I would surely earn, I would transfer to Massachusetts Institute of Technology where I would pursue a doctorate in engineering. I planned to

use my PhD and my superior intellect to save the world from itself through science. In my youthful naivete, I thought a world devoid of hunger and want would be a world at peace. I planned to pursue this world-changing research at Bell Telephone Laboratories. Many wonderful inventions such as the transistor and the laser had come out of research at Bell Labs and I knew in my heart, Bell's wonderful research lab was where my future lay.

But, the God I had rejected as fantasy had other plans for me and stepped in to change the course of my life.

Chapter 5: The College Years

Two weeks out of high school, I found myself in a college summer algebra class at the local university and eager to charge ahead into my education and engineering career. Then reality smacked me full in the face.

I soon found that my country high school education had done little to prepare me for the rigor and intricacies of college-level math, especially calculus. Calculus was a foreign language which I had never heard spoken, and I struggled to understand it. To compound my problems, my 32 mile commute to the university from home in an unreliable automobile and my need to work part-time to fill in financial gaps left me very short of time to study and to sleep. Within a year I was struggling physically and emotionally. I found it next to impossible to keep up with my homework. I could see my dream of saving the world from itself starting to crumble and I became depressed and filled with self doubt.

Somehow, I managed to pass most of my classes over the next two years with one painful exception – calculus. I knew that a thorough understanding of calculus was essential to a meaningful career in any science. I began to doubt that I had the mental capacity to master it.

To avoid having to deal with calculus, I switched my major to botany. A semester later, I switched to chemistry. I was doing well in chemistry and was actually enjoying it. Then, I began to have problems with burning, itching rashes on my hands and wrists because I was allergic to some of the chemicals I was using in my organic chemistry labs. I feared that my career as a chemist was also doomed and that added to my frustration and depression.

I knew at that point my grand dream of a college education was about to come crashing down leaving me vulnerable to the dreaded Army draft board and the horrors of war in Vietnam. Desperate to avoid the draft, I fought through fear, frustration and fatigue. I put on clumsy rubber gloves when in the chemistry lab and determined that I was going to finish my degree whatever the cost. I moved closer to school, partly to reduce my commute time, and partly because my parents house had become haunted and I hadn't had a good night's sleep in months due to fear of the ghost. I cut my work hours, and spent every spare moment in the library studying, or in the college parking lot napping in my car. It was a valiant effort but it was too little too late. I was on the verge of a total emotional and physical breakdown.

By this time I was seriously involved in a romantic relationship with a woman who had been a long-time friend and fellow 4-H club member. The relationship was good for me emotionally, and physically. She did her best to encourage me to eat regular meals and to press on in my studies.

Early in what would be my last year of college for a while – it was eighteen years actually before returned to finish my degree -- I began to wonder if maybe I should give up my dream of a college education and return to studying on my own for a career in electronics technology. I had found while studying electronics as a hobby that I had a knack for understanding such things and I enjoyed it, so why not make a career of it?

One day in the autumn of that year, I cut an organic chemistry lecture to spend some time wandering the university book store to let my mind idle while trying to decide what I was going to do with my life. I was in the Science and Technology section of the store looking for a book that might give me ideas on how to prepare for a career as an electronics technician. I failed to find exactly what I wanted so I decided to leave the store and try the university library. On my way back through the science and

technology section of the bookstore on my way to the door, something caught my eye; a book that had been misplaced; a book from the “Religion and Spirituality” section. It was titled “Impossible Yet it Happened”. It purported to be about hauntings, communication with spirits, and strange physical phenomena which had no plausible scientific explanation. I was irritated that such a book had found its way into the midst of the books on science. After all, such silly nonsense had no part in the fact-based rigor of science. I started to give the offending paperback a toss across the top of the bookshelf into the religion section when something I glimpsed on the back cover of the book struck a chord somewhere deep in my psyche. It was as if something about that book was screaming “READ ME”.

I stood there staring at the little paperback for several seconds trying to analyze my sudden powerful emotional response to it, then I turned it over and read the back cover. On the back cover was a statement about eye witness accounts of hot rocks falling out of a clear blue sky. It purported that this had happened more than once in various parts of the world. As I read this, I recalled a story my father had told me when I was much younger about people claiming that such a thing had actually happened somewhere in the world. For reasons I didn't then fully understand, I stood there staring at that book cover for quite some time. I didn't recognize it at the time, but a strong sense of curiosity overtook me and prompted me to purchase the book and read it. I recognized years later that the strange feeling was a perfectly natural hunger to live in a world that made more sense than a world governed only by blind chance - a world where a superior someone was in charge and things happened for a good reason. I was feeling what today we would call today a God shaped hole in my heart.

I told myself that I would read the book, collect the evidence and go back to my dad with a perfectly sound scientific explanation for the hot rocks from the sky phenomenon. I bought it, skipped all my classes that day, and read it. By the time I finished the book, a hook was set in my soul and an unseen hand began dragging me toward a totally unfamiliar view of the world and belief in things I had previously considered nonsense.

Chapter 6: The Occult

Throughout my last semester of college I tried sporadically to bring my grades up and save what was left of my dignity, and my parent's money and approval. It was to no avail. My deep emotional response to that “misplaced” book about unexplained phenomena had driven the final nail into the coffin of my ambition to earn a college education. I was burned out from stress and a lack of sleep. I wanted to go hide in a tree somewhere - as I had done often as a child - and sleep, read, and ignore the expectations of people around me. The guilt I felt for failing to live up to my parent’s expectations was killing me. I gave in to my curiosity about the contents of that book, gave up my studies, and abandoned myself to the siren call of the strange little book.

I started by reading the stories about the hot rocks falling from the sky. I searched for evidence in them that would point to a sound scientific basis for the phenomenon. There wasn't much substance to the stories though; mostly many-times-retold third party accounts of such happenings with few details. A search of the university library also yielded little more useful data on the subject.

At that point, as a scientist, I should have discarded the book as useless dribble about unsubstantiated urban legend – but I couldn't. It was as if the damnable thing had attached itself to my brain and refused to let go. I was intensely curious to see what other strange stories the book had to offer. After a short argument with myself, I tossed aside my quest for scientific truth and abandoned myself to whatever the book had to offer.

I think I thought the book's stories might at least distract me for a while from my troubles.

In the book were several chapters devoted to stories of people communicating with the dead. They spoke of séances where the dead would communicate with the living through a special person called a “medium”. It also described other methods for communicating with the dead; Ouija Boards, automatic writing, and other methods where the dead supposedly have the ability to inhabit and use a living person's body or to influence normally random phenomena such as dice rolling. While reading a story about using a Ouija Board to talk to dead loved ones, the practical, more objective side of my brain started to think, “I know this stuff about spirits of the dead is nonsense because I know that there is no conscious part of us that can survive death. Maybe, I surmised, the people “communicating” with such spirits are actually accessing a hidden layer of their own mind which is given voice by the Ouija Board. Re-energized by the prospect of being able to redeem myself by discovering a more effective method of psychoanalysis, I immediately went back to the bookstore and purchased a Ouija Board. That turned out to be one of the worst mistakes of my life.

According to the books on the subject, the Ouija Board works better when two people are operating it. I wanted to get to the truth about the strange device and possibly learn something important about our unconscious minds in the process. I enlisted the help of my girlfriend and we put it to the test. We soon found that the thing actually worked. We spent some time communicating with whatever “spirits” desired to take the time to talk to us. I carefully recorded and analyzed their answers like any good scientist. I was looking for clues as to whether these “spirits” were who they claimed to be or whether they were our own subconscious minds fooling us into thinking we were talking to spirits.

I spent the next several weeks playing with the board, experimenting with other methods of spirit communication, and talking with others at the university who had experience with the Ouija Board. The evidence I gathered seemed to be ambiguous at best. In some of the sessions with mediums and the Ouija Board I seemed to receive information that could not have been in the memory of any of the

living persons involved. Whatever these “spirits” were, they seemed to have information that could only have been known by the dead person the spirit was purporting to be. At other times, it was obvious that the “spirit” had no such special knowledge and was simply the other live person involved fishing for information from the rest of us they could use to weave a more convincing but completely false “spirit communication”.

I spent a lot of time in my quest to demystify the Ouija Board and so soon found myself feeling guilty again about my lack of attention to my studies. I knew I should give it up and return to studying chemistry, and I almost did. But, then, something happened that stunned me, turned my world view upside down, and drove a stake through the heart of my cherished atheistic world view once and for all.

My girlfriend was living with her aunt at the time and we had often used her aunt's house as a sanctuary from the noisy world of the university to talk about our future and to experiment with spirit communication. This fateful evening, we were alone in the aunt's house where we knew we wouldn't be disturbed while we played with the Ouija Board. After a few minutes of light-hearted conversation with a spirit who called herself JIL, I began to press the spirit for proof of her existence. I demanded to know if she was truly there. Was “she” a living, thinking entity there in the room with us or were we just foolishly talking to ourselves through the Ouija Board. Immediately, the board started to move and spelled out “RUTH” and two numbers, then it stopped dead.

I asked, “what does that mean”?

Silence.

I looked at my girlfriend and said, “well, I guess she wants us to figure it out for ourselves”.

I knew enough about the Bible to know that there was an old testament book named Ruth. I had my girlfriend find her aunt's bible and I opened it to the book of Ruth. I thought that maybe the two numbers were chapter and verse numbers for some Bible verse the spirit wanted us to read. I turned to the chapter indicated by the first number, then to the verse indicated by the second number – the verse made no sense in the context of that moment.

I asked the spirit again for proof of her existence. Again the board rapidly spelled out RUTH and the same two numbers. I looked at the book of Ruth again. This time I turned the chapter and verse numbers around – it still made no sense.

Frustrated, I opened my mouth to demand proof again when my eye caught sight of the university book store bag I had left sitting on the couch. A cold chill coursed through my body and my hands began to tremble. That very afternoon I had purchased a book about the spirit world from the bookstore. The book title was “A Search for the Truth” by RUTH Montgomery!

I bought the book based solely upon the description of its contents printed on the back cover. Ms. Montgomery claimed that the entirety of its text had been given to her by automatic writing as she sat in a trance at her typewriter. I had read about automatic writing. It is a method of communication with spirits in which the spirit takes control of a living person's body and either writes or types a message. I was curious and wanted to see what her “spirits” had to say about the worlds of the living and the dead. I had never opened the covers of the book.

I pulled the book from the bag, opened it to the page indicated by the first number and counted down

the page to the sentence indicated by the second number. If I live to be a thousand years old, I will never forget that sentence – it totally destroyed my world view. Here is exactly what I read “**We are here too, yet totally unbound by any physical law, we are bound only by the laws of God**”. In that moment I knew we were not talking to ourselves but to an invisible, but very real, thinking personality that for some unknown reason had a desire to talk with us.

The book went on to explain that this world is inhabited by much more than we mortal humans and that they, the spirits, live in a totally different environment, an extension of our world in which its inhabitants have no physical limitations.

Bit by bit the book and the spirits guided me into the belief that they were here to guide the people of our world to a better life and a better society based on the wisdom they, the dead, had accumulated over eons of time. They taught me that the concept of “sin” is a destructive human idea that sprang out of our own sense of guilt. It is a destructive force that fills us unnecessarily with fear of the retribution of an angry god. They said that when we die, we continue on as a spirit in the world that they inhabit. In that world we have the opportunity to continue the work we started in this life but we would be much more effective in that work because we would have physical and mental abilities not available to us in our present state.

In my state of physical and emotional exhaustion, filled with guilt about the recent past and fearful of the future, what the spirits had to say really appealed to me. Unfortunately, as I was soon to discover, it was all a lie and a deadly trap.

For a time, my college studies were completely forgotten and I poured myself into a quest to know more about this wonderful world I would someday inhabit. I read numerous books on the subject by famous authors like Edgar Cayce and Ruth Montgomery and I spent many hours with the Ouija Board pressing the spirits for guidance. I felt empowered by my newfound knowledge and a bit proud that I had been chosen by the spirits to be an ambassador for them in this world of the “living”. I seemed to have found a new purpose in life. I was being trained for a career of far greater importance than the one I had chosen for myself.

Then, things started to go very wrong.

I began to have doubts that the spirits were telling me the complete truth. Some of their answers to my questions either didn't make sense, or were in contradiction to previous “teachings”. Over a period of about a month, I began to suspect that the spirits either didn't know what they were doing, or worse, didn't have my best interest at heart. I wondered if they were leading me into some sort of trap. I knew without a doubt that these spirits existed, that they had mental and physical abilities that far exceeded my own and that there was no place to hide from them. I was essentially at their mercy.

The spirits began to warn me not to go into the “Temple”. They warned me that the “Temple”, whatever that was, was filled with fire. I had no idea at that time what they meant. It was just another of many confusing or misleading pronouncements from the spirit world that lead me to believe that my relationship with my spirit friends had taken a nasty turn and that something was very wrong between us.

I was having trouble sleeping. I was afraid the spirits might do something bad to me as I slept so I slept very little. This only exacerbated my problems by weakening my body and reducing my ability to reason. After a few weeks of this constant fear and sleep deprivation, I began to have thoughts of

suicide. The only thing that kept me from acting on these thoughts was knowing that if I died, I would be in their world, and permanently in their hands.

By sheer strength of will I pulled myself out of the pit of depression I had fallen into and decided that the best defense for me against this insidious foe would be a good offense. I had nothing to lose, and maybe, I thought, if I stood up to them and confronted them about their erratic and frightening behavior, they would at least back away from me and allow me to resume the life I had known before I met them.

For a time I avoided direct contact with the spirits and went back to my books on the occult arts to see if I could find an answer in them for my dilemma. Maybe I was doing something wrong that was angering the spirits. The books weren't much help though so I decided to try direct communication with my spirit friends again to try to work things out.

On a pleasant summer evening a week or so later, I was with a friend at my parents' house using the Ouija Board to try to attempt to find out from my favorite spirit named JIL what I had done to upset her spirit friends. JIL had a particular style of communicating through the board that was characterized by light, easy flowing movements of the pointer and light-hearted answers that made it seem that she was a friendly, loving spirit who loved me and was always thrilled when I took time to communicate with her.

I was asking questions about some of the confusing answers I had received from other spirits and JIL was trying to answer them when suddenly, she stopped answering me. A cold chill fell over the room and some dark feeling of hate and dread seemed to descend upon the two of us. It was as if someone had flipped a cosmic switch and suddenly the loving, light-hearted JIL had been replaced by something evil. I looked up from the board and there, in the door of my room, stood my aunt.

This aunt of mine had listened patiently with apparent interest over the past several months as my girlfriend and I poured out to her everything the spirits were teaching us about their world and about our future involvement in its affairs. She seemed to be supportive of our efforts to seek the wisdom of the spirits and seemed genuinely interested in what they had to say. Now, here she stood in my former bedroom staring with a look of disgust at the Ouija Board on my bed. The cold feeling of fear and sense of the presence of evil my friend and I were feeling seemed to have followed her into the room. I wasn't sure what to think or say. I just sat there with my hand on the board and stared at her.

My aunt stepped into the room, looked me in the eye and boldly told me that the spirits I had befriended and the device I was using to communicate with them were of the Devil and that he was using them to lure me by attractive deceptions away from the grace of God and into Hell.

I self-consciously pulled my hands back from the Ouija Board and dropped them in my lap in preparation for a lecture from my aunt.

She looked at me, then at the board, and told me to put my hands back onto the pointer because she was going to ask it some questions and force it to answer her to prove to me that what she had just said about it was true.

I reluctantly put my hands back onto the Ouija pointer. As soon as I touched it, it began to move with fast, jerky movements and spelled out "GO TO HELL MARILYN".

I pulled my hands away from the pointer and looked at my aunt to tell her it wasn't me, I would never say that to her.

My aunt held up her hand to stop me and told me to put my hand back onto the pointer.

I was terrified and on the verge of tears but I did as she told me.

She approached the board, pointed a finger at it and said in a loud voice, "spirit of the Ouija Board I command you in the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God to answer my questions and to answer them truthfully".

I half expected the thing to bite me. It did nothing. I sat there shaking, with tears in my eyes, waiting for her first question.

She asked it, "Ouija Board, whom do you serve"?

Slowly, obviously under extreme duress, it spelled out, "GOD".

I relaxed for a few seconds. Maybe, I thought, these spirits weren't as awful as my aunt had just claimed they were.

Then she asked, "what is the name of your god"?

The board hesitated.

My aunt again demanded in Jesus name a truthful answer.

The board immediately answered, "Beelzebub".

She pointed again at the board and demanded, "in the name of Jesus answer me", "who does Beelzebub serve?".

With very quick, deliberate strokes driven by hatred, the board spat out "SATAN".

I jerked my shaking hands away from the Ouija Board and stared through my tears at my aunt as she shoved the board onto the floor and sat down on my bed to talk about what had just happened.

Chapter 7: The Lighting Miracle

I would like to be able to report that after the battle between the Ouija Board and my aunt I accepted Christ, renounced any involvement in the occult, and lived happily ever after. But, due to my stubbornness and fear of being deceived again, it didn't quite happen that way.

Weeks later, at the the insistence of my Aunt and her evangelist friend, I finally prayed the sinner's prayer and gave my life to Christ Jesus. Immediately thereafter, the sense of the presence of my former spirit friends left me and I felt a profound sense of emptiness and loneliness. I was a bit frightened by this, and saddened. But, elder Christians assured me that this emptiness would soon pass as God filled me with a sense of the presence of his Holy Spirit. They were right. It wasn't long before I was keenly aware of the presence of God's spirit within me and the loneliness and fear vanished.

I repented of any involvement in my former occult activities, trashed all my occult books and paraphernalia and was determined to live a life devoted to and led by whom the Bible says is the one true God. I had seen evidence of the power and authority of this God I now followed in the fear and hatred of Him the mention of His name caused my former friends in the spirit world. But, occasionally, I still had moments of uneasiness about my relationship with Him because I had lingering fear that I was again being deceived and used as a pawn in some cosmic power play I couldn't see nor understand.

In the spring of 1969 I married my girlfriend and started a family. We attended church and tried to live in obedience to the teachings of Jesus and, for the most part, life was good, except for my nagging fear of being deceived again.

In the spring of 1971 we were living in a mobile home community in an area which had been devastated more than once by tornadoes, We felt relatively safe living there because the park had a large underground tornado shelter just a short walk from our home.

One night, during a torrential rain shower just after dark, the tornado warning sirens came on. The report on the television indicated that a tornado had been sighted on the ground only a couple of miles south of us and was moving our direction. I went outside to see if the tornado shelter was open yet and was told by the park manager that we couldn't go into the shelter because the heavy rain had flooded it with mud and water. With no safe shelter at the park we were faced with the choice of staying in our home and hoping that the tornado would miss the park, or going somewhere else where we might find shelter.

I remembered that my aunt lived about five miles East of us and that she had an underground tornado shelter at her house. We quickly decided that attempting the run to my aunts' house in the driving storm was somewhat safer than sitting where we were in an unprotected mobile home and hoping that the tornado wouldn't hit us.

The drive to my aunt's house was frightening. The wind was blowing from the south at near 50 miles per hour, it was raining very hard, and the rain was mixed with small hail and blowing debris. A couple of miles from the mobile home park, the cars' engine suddenly died. That left us stranded in the middle of the road at the mercy of a dangerous storm in the dark. Fortunately, this car had done this to me once before in a rain storm and I knew that the problem was most likely water that had splashed into the engine compartment and had gotten into the ignition distributor. I found a flashlight in the glove box and frantically searched the car for something to use to dry the inside of the wet distributor cap. My baby son's diaper was the only dry cloth in the car. Despite the hurricane force wind and the driving

rain, I managed to dry the distributor and tie the diaper around it to help keep more water from getting inside it. The engine started again and we continued our drive to the safety of my aunt's shelter.

When we reached the small town where my aunt lived, we were astounded to see that the storm we had just escaped was raging all around us with rain, hail and high winds, but it was calm as the eye of a hurricane inside the city limits of that small town.

My aunt came out to greet us and she, my wife, myself and one other person stood in her front yard marveling at the power of the storm that surrounded the town and at the total calm we were experiencing where we stood. It was as if someone had set a fish bowl over the town to protect it from the storm.

After a few minutes of light chatter about the storm, we stood in silence for a while watching the intense lightning show that surrounded us. I watched a huge bolt of lightning arc across the sky almost directly above us. Its brilliance captured our attention and left the four of us staring at the same point in the empty night sky. I don't recall why I said it, but I said "wouldn't it be neat if the lightning wrote Jesus Christ across the sky?". My aunt replied "J C would be good enough for me". In the instant she finished that sentence, a gigantic J appeared written in lightning in the same clear portion of the sky that the brilliant flash had moments earlier directed all our eyes. The J was immediately followed, in the exact same spot in the sky, by an equally gigantic lightning bolt in the shape of a C. There was no mistaking what we four had just seen. There was no doubt among us that we had just witnessed a spectacular miracle performed by the hand of God.

When we could speak again, someone, my wife, I think, said, "they were backwards", "the letters were backwards!".

I replied, "yes, because they were written from above – by someone looking down at us!".

We stood there in shocked silence for several minutes staring at the sky until we regained our composure sufficiently to go inside out of the approaching storm and have ourselves a prayer meeting.

Chapter 8: The Radio Story

This chapter was written as a stand-alone work which I have given to, or told to, many people over the years to encourage them to seek God and find the security and joy of salvation through Christ Jesus.

Sometimes it amazes me how the human mind works. We see evidence all around us of something that should be obvious to us, but somehow our minds choose not to connect the dots and make the obvious connection between the evidence and reality. It has something to do with our belief systems. If the evidence contradicts something we already strongly believe, our minds filter it out making it invisible to us in order to “protect” us from the stress of a changing world view. Sometimes this protection mechanism is so effective that God is forced to violate the barriers between His world and ours, break laws of physics, and intervene in the natural course of a life to break the grip of our blindness. Look to the life of Saul of Tarsus as a perfect example of this.

What follows is a true story; a record of an event through which God miraculously saved me from a horrible death and broke a destructive cycle of self doubt that threatened to consume and destroy me.

This particular time was at a point in my life when I had serious doubt that God was interested in me as a person. I knew I was saved, I never doubted that, but, partly because I had fallen out of the habit of studying God's Word and spending quiet time with Him every day, I had begun to believe that He was angry with me. I believed that the only reason He tolerated me was that I was providing a living for a godly woman and her children. He blessed me only so I could bless them.

This line of thinking was, of course, false to the point of being ridiculous. The evidence that God loved me as an individual was clear and unambiguous, but my mind refused to see it. In the years prior to this incident, God had carefully crafted a series of events that lead me away from a totally humanistic, atheistic view of the world to the knowledge that the world is also inhabited by invisible spiritual beings, and finally to the realization that God is the ultimate authority and that I was a condemned sinner in serious need of a Savior.

Along that journey, I had made friends in the world of spirits and had actually fallen in love with one of them. Then, a brave believer in Christ Jesus pointed out to me that these spirits I had befriended were actually demons. They were fallen angels intending not to lead me into life saving enlightenment, but intending to do me harm by separating me from the only source of salvation – faith in Jesus, the son of the living God. For my sake, she confronted those spirit friends and forced them in the name of Jesus to admit to me that they were deceiving me and that they are not the servants of a benevolent god, but the servants of Satan, the author of evil and the enemy of God and all who serve Him.

Within a few days of that eye-opening encounter with that brave Christ-loving woman, I turned away from my involvement in the occult arts and my association with those spirits and accepted the free gift of salvation through Christ Jesus. My new-found relationship with Christ filled me with a sense of relief and peace I had never known, but, somewhere in my mind I still missed the intimate relationship I had enjoyed with my old spirit friends. Over a period of months, the enemy picked at that sense of loss until I fell into a period of intense loneliness and mourning for the loss of the companionship I had found in my now-distant spirit friends. I was totally cut off from them. Some kind of barrier had been erected between that world and myself and, though I missed them, thank God, I was totally unable to contact them. I felt empty and lonely because I had not yet developed a personal relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit.

I began to have doubts about this new world view in which God was the ultimate authority, and I

started to think that maybe I had forged an alliance with yet another spiritual impostor who was not what He had represented Himself to be. Fortunately, God saw my need and set in motion events that would lead to a deep connection between His Spirit and mine and would turn that loneliness and sense of loss into indescribable joy and peace. It took a combination of a spectacular miracle and the teaching of more mature believers to lead me to desire, and to eventually ask for, the Holy Spirit to cleanse me, drive away my doubts and take control of my life.

The story of the spectacular miracle which eliminated those doubts is recorded in another story of this series and I won't go into it here. I will leave it to God to lead you to it and to help you learn of Him from it. For the purposes of this story in the series, it will suffice to say that God did something for me that astounded me, shattered all my doubts, and showed me that He has absolute power over matter, space, and time, and that there is nothing that exists that will not yield to his infinite power and authority. That miracle, and the connection I felt with God through the infilling of the Holy Spirit wiped away any doubt that I had again made the wrong choice.

Having witnessed this and other life-changing miracles, it amazes me that I was still so blind as to fall into a pit of despair I had dug for myself. In my downward spiral into self doubt, I began to believe that I was worthless to God except as a meal ticket for my wife and children. The remainder of this story is the record of the miracle God used to convince me once and for all that I am His beloved child and that He is continually active in my life to guide me, teach me, protect me, and use me for His purposes.

It was the late nineteen seventies. I don't remember the exact month or year, but I remember the incident as if it happened yesterday.

A coworker at the avionics repair shop where I was employed had given me an ancient tube-type radio receiver that had been built to receive only one frequency, the frequency used by aircraft to communicate with the local airport control tower. I spent a lot of time in my basement electronics workshop either fixing things for other people, communicating with other ham radio operators, or trying to design electronic gadgets to sell to help lighten the family's financial burden. I thought listening to the local airport tower chatter would help me relax and keep my mind off my problems.

Against one wall of my tiny workshop was a very heavy steel radio rack, a kind of steel closet into which electronic equipment could be installed so only the face of the equipment showed and all the associated ugly wires, cables and radio innards were hidden inside it. It was about six feet tall and probably weighed about 200 pounds. I had already installed in it various pieces of radio gear and electronic test equipment. It was pretty full, but there seemed to be just about enough spare room in it to mount this newly-acquired aircraft radio receiver.

I spent some time rearranging the equipment in the rack and was able to just make room for the receiver. When installed, the receiver was right at eye level near the top of the rack. I connected power to the receiver, turned it on and let it warm up while I searched for a set of headphones I could use to test it. Several minutes passed before I found my headphones. I plugged them into the receiver and turned up the volume. It worked perfectly and I was delighted.

Now, for testing the receiver, standing there listening through a set of headphones was fine. But, for longer term listening, I needed to connect the receiver to a speaker. I had noticed when I installed the receiver that there was a terminal strip on the back of its chassis that looked like connections for a speaker; at least I was hoping that's what it was. I searched my workshop and found an old radio speaker in my junk box, connected some wires to it, set it on top of the radio rack, and draped the wires

down the back side of the rack so I could connect them to the receiver. I couldn't reach the speaker terminals on the receiver because the rack was too close to the wall. I tugged and pulled and twisted the rack and managed to move the heavy beast out from the wall about ten inches. This was just enough that I could squeeze between it and the wall behind it.

With screwdriver in hand, I squeezed my body into the narrow space between the rack and the wall and turned so I could face the rear of the receiver. With the screwdriver, I began to connect the speaker wires to the terminal strip. Just as the screwdriver touched the first terminal, I was startled by a very loud scream. It was clearly my wife's voice, and she had screamed my name. It sounded like she was in terrible pain.

I immediately dropped the screwdriver, leaped out from behind the radio rack and began to run. Several terrible scenarios flashed through my mind; she was being electrocuted, she had been badly burned, or one of the children had been injured. I had no idea what had just happened but I knew I had to get upstairs to my wife as fast as my legs would carry me.

The spring-loaded door to my workshop had closed and I hit it at a full run nearly tearing it off its hinges. I sprinted across the basement floor and started up the basement stairs, taking them three at a time. When I was about half way up the stairs the lights flashed off then back on and the house was rocked by a loud explosion that rattled the basement windows. Now I was totally terrified. I imagined my poor wife blown to bits all over the upstairs.

When I reached the door at the top of the basement stairs, I hit it running so hard that I split the wood of the door frame around the latch and bent the hinges. It flew open and slammed into the back door to the house with a loud crash. I leaped the several feet from the basement door into the kitchen and spun around to look into the laundry room.

In the laundry room, to my complete amazement, I saw my wife calmly taking clothes out of the washer and putting them into the dryer. I was stunned to say the least. She appeared to be completely unharmed and relaxed. I stood there for several seconds staring at her, not knowing what to think, except that maybe, I was losing my mind and that I had imagined what had just happened. Maybe it was a hallucination.

I asked her "why did you scream"?

She looked at me with a puzzled look as if she wasn't sure what I had just said and replied "I didn't scream".

I asked her "what was that explosion"?

She just shrugged and said "I thought the kids knocked something over downstairs".

She went back to moving her laundry and I just stood there in complete confusion trying to make some sense of the situation. I was shaking from the adrenaline and from fear that I truly was losing my mind. I fought the urge to cry.

I slowly turned around and headed back downstairs to check on the kids. I thought maybe she was right, that the kids had knocked over a shelf or something where they were playing in the basement. Part way down the stairs I noticed thick white smoke rising from the top of the lower basement door

and flowing into the stairway. I panicked. The kids were down there and something appeared to be on fire. I jumped over stairs three at a time as I raced down them into the basement.

As I entered the main room of the basement, I noticed two things. The kids were calmly playing house in the kitchen of the downstairs apartment, apparently oblivious to the smoke. And that thick white smoke was pouring out from under the door to my workshop.

I opened the basement windows in the main room to let the smoke out, then slowly opened the door to the workshop. I couldn't see any open flames, so I felt my way through the thick, choking smoke in the workshop to the outside wall and opened that basement window. Then I ran back out into the main room to catch my breath. The smoke burned my eyes and lungs and had that acrid odor of an electrical fire.

After a minute or so, the smoke began to dissipate and I entered the workshop to investigate its source. What I found shocked me to my core. It immediately drove a spike through any thoughts I had ever entertained that God wasn't interested in me, that He didn't love me, or that He was too disappointed in me to care what happened to me.

I stood terrified, shaking, and weeping as I stared at the devastation inside and behind the radio rack.

On the wall behind the radio rack, directly behind where my head would have been, was a spot of hot, smoking tar about ten inches in diameter. Inside the smoking blot of boiling tar, aluminum shrapnel had nearly penetrated the half-inch sheet rock of the wall. The power cords from the radios above the new receiver had been severed as if by an ax and the inside of that old radio receiver had been obliterated by the force of a powerful explosion. All I could do was stand there, stare at it, and cry.

I soon realized that four seconds after I heard that scream and leaped out from behind the radio rack, a large, aluminum cased, tar sealed, filter capacitor in that receiver, a heavy aluminum cylinder about two inches in diameter and four inches long, had exploded with the force of a hand grenade. The filter capacitor had been mounted near the rear of the receiver chassis *directly above the speaker terminals to which I had been attempting to attach the speaker wires.*

If God had not projected that voice into my consciousness and caused me to jump out from behind that radio rack, I would have received the full force of the explosion directly in my face. My face had been only a few inches from that capacitor. I would have surely been killed, or instantly blinded and horribly disfigured for life.

Now, every time I look into a mirror, I am reminded that God loves me and that He is right here watching me and continually protecting me from harm.

Praise be to God for His love and boundless mercy!

William DeHaven
May, 2015

Chapter 9: The Computer Incident

In late 2013, we had been living in Arizona and active in our church for a little over a year. The church music minister had been tasked with the job of doing a survey of the church members to determine who was capable and available to perform various tasks of church maintenance and to help older or infirm members with various home maintenance tasks.

I considered the various tasks and skills they required and eventually decided that, since I was having a lot of trouble with back pain, there was little I was willing to commit to doing in the way of physical labor.

Rather than completing the form, I decided to send an email to the music minister explaining that I was not physically capable of doing much of the physical work the church needed done but that I had a lot of experience in electronics and would be willing to help any member who had any electronics in need of repair or setup.

I sat down at my computer and began to type the email. I explained the problem with my back which would prevent me from performing most of the physical maintenance tasks and then started to type the following sentence, "However I would be willing to repair or install any electronic devices owned by the church or its members". Everything went perfectly until I tried to type the "e" in the word "electronics". When I hit the "e" key on the computer keyboard, the email editor program locked up and would not respond to any keystroke.

I sat and stared at the monitor for a minute or so wondering what went wrong. I had been using that particular email client program for years and had never had a problem with it. I figured that there had been some sort of transient glitch in the program or in the operating system that had caused the lockup. Perhaps a random cosmic ray had temporarily corrupted the computer memory and caused the program to crash. I decided to close and restart the email program and try again.

I restarted the email from scratch and everything went fine, including typing lots of words containing the letter "e"; until I tried to type the word "electronics". Again, when I hit the "e" key, the program locked up and became totally unresponsive. This time, even the operating system locked up; the computer would not respond in any way to keyboard inputs or mouse movements! I was mystified. I had been using the Debian Linux operating system for about 12 years and had never seen it lock up like this. I sat staring at the monitor for several minutes wondering what I could have done wrong to cause Linux to act this way. I began to wonder if maybe I was accidentally pressing another key on the keyboard when reaching for the "e" key and causing the problem myself. I was unable to bring up a terminal window to solve the problem or to use the CTL-ALT-DELETE key combination to force a reboot. I was left with no choice but to completely turn off the computer and restart it.

After a few minutes, the operating system rebooted normally. Everything seemed to be working normally. I ran a memory test program which showed no problems with the computer memory. Then, I opened a text editor and tried typing a number of words containing the letter "e". Then I tried typing letter "e" several times in combination with keys that I thought I might be accidentally pressing when typing the word "electronics". Then I tried typing the word "electronics" several times. Everything was working perfectly. So, I restarted the email program and went back to typing the email to the music minister. I thought that perhaps rebooting the computer and restarting the email program would move the program to a different memory location in the computer and avoid a possible bad byte in memory.

Again, the typing went as expected until I got to the word “electronics”. Just to be sure I wasn’t accidentally hitting more than one key when I reached for the “e” key I used my extended index finger to press the “e” key so I could avoid any possible accidental key press. It happened again. The computer locked up and was totally unresponsive to any keyboard input or mouse movement. I stared at the email I had been typing and noted that there were numerous words in it containing the letter “e”. None of those letter “e”s had caused a problem, even in words starting with that letter.

Now I was really confused and spooked. I realized that someone from outside our physical world was causing the computer to lock up and prevent me from writing that email. They did NOT want me to write it. There was no other plausible explanation for it.

I reached behind the computer and pulled the power cord plug out of the outlet, pushed away from the computer and, when I felt like my shaking legs would hold me, I said out loud “OK Lord, I can take a hint”. Then I walked away from the computer and went for a long walk to calm my nerves.

The next day, almost afraid to touch that computer again, I plugged it in and rebooted it. Everything seemed to be working fine. I never again attempted to send that email. I continued to use that computer for several years with no further problems.

The thing that frightens me about this incident is that the email program I was using, it’s underlying computer operating system, and the computer hardware running this software are all very complex systems. However, the spirit who manipulated this complex hardware and software knew exactly what to do to it at just the right moment in time to cause the software to lock up the computer.

Whoever locked up that computer three times to stop me from making a serious mistake, perhaps the Holy Spirit or my guardian angel, had deep, detailed knowledge of the construction and operation of that very complex computer system. And, knowing that there are today millions of people using large language models and other A.I. enabled software to augment their own limited creative abilities, I am very concerned about the possibility that the output of such programs may be manipulated by evil spiritual entities in order to quietly advance Satan’s destructive agenda in this world. Think about this before using any A.I. based system such as chatbots, LLMs, or any A.I. augmented image, music or text generating software system. Think about what a “demon possessed” LLM you might use for work or fun could subtly do to affect your thinking and possibly ruin your life and your relationship with the living God.

Since I am still living, and am sure God is still watching out for me, there will probably be more to write about in the future. I, for now, have no idea why the Lord has blessed me by allowing me to witness his infinite power in action. It certainly has made it easier for this science-oriented engineer to hold fast to my faith in Christ Jesus while surrounded by hordes of unbelieving, self-centered sceptics.

God bless you for taking the time to read my story. I hope these stories have helped you in some way better understand what an awesome God we have. And, I hope what you have learned here will encourage you to seek a close personal relationship with our Lord and savior. It certainly makes this painful, frustrating life easier to tolerate knowing that, through faith in Him, we are promised eternal life in the presence of the almighty God.

Please feel free to share this work with anyone whom you think might benefit from it.