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Principia Summer Session
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*The Gospel of Thomas
and the Bible*

WHY IT MATTERS TO
CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS

Poll Questions

1. Do you know why the Gospel of Thomas is not in the Bible?
2. Do you know how to define Gnosticism?
3. Do you know what Mrs. Eddy says about Gnosticism?

1. It has been hailed internationally by millions of people.
2. It has lots of content in common with Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke.
3. It has 114 sayings attributed to Jesus, about half of which are new to us now.
4. It portrays Jesus in similar ways as in the New Testament – divine and powerful.



Saying 77

**I am the light which is
above them all.**

I am the all.

**The all has come forth from
me.**

**Lift the stone, you will find
me there.**

**Split the piece of wood, I
am there.**



Saying 61

Jesus said to Salome, “I am from the Equality.

I was endowed with what belongs to my Father.

Therefore I tell you, whoever becomes equal will be filled with light, but if divided, full of darkness.”

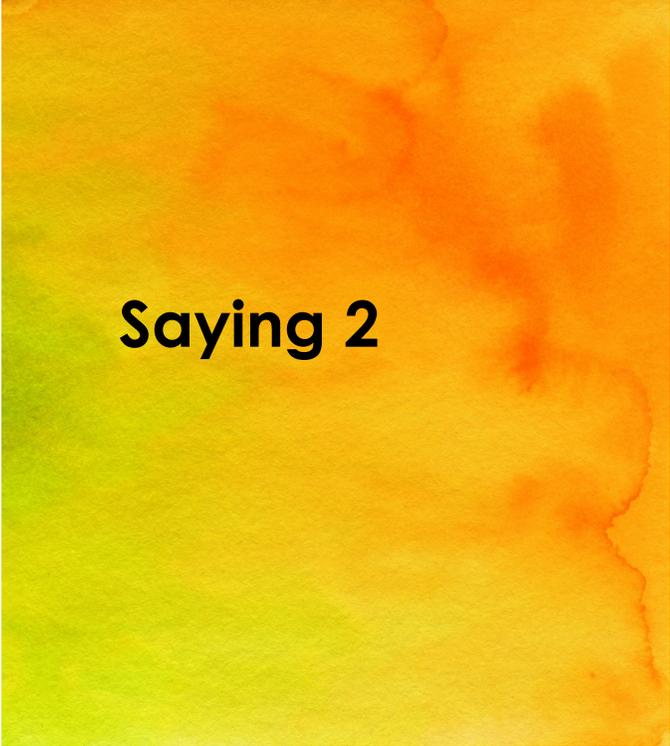


Saying 31

Jesus said,

**“No prophet is accepted
in his or her own village.**

**No physician heals
those who know him.”**

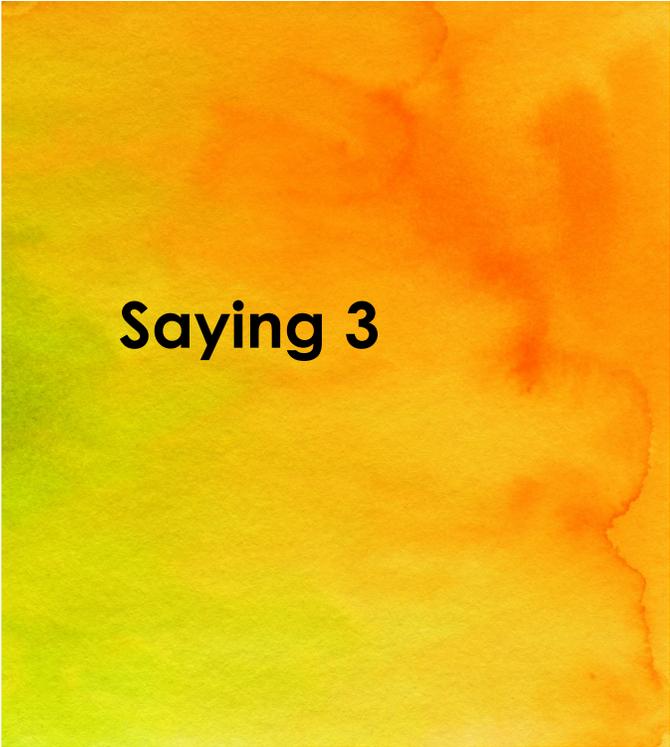


Saying 2



Let the one who
seeks keep seeking
until s/he finds.

like Matthew 7:7-8,
Luke 11:9-10

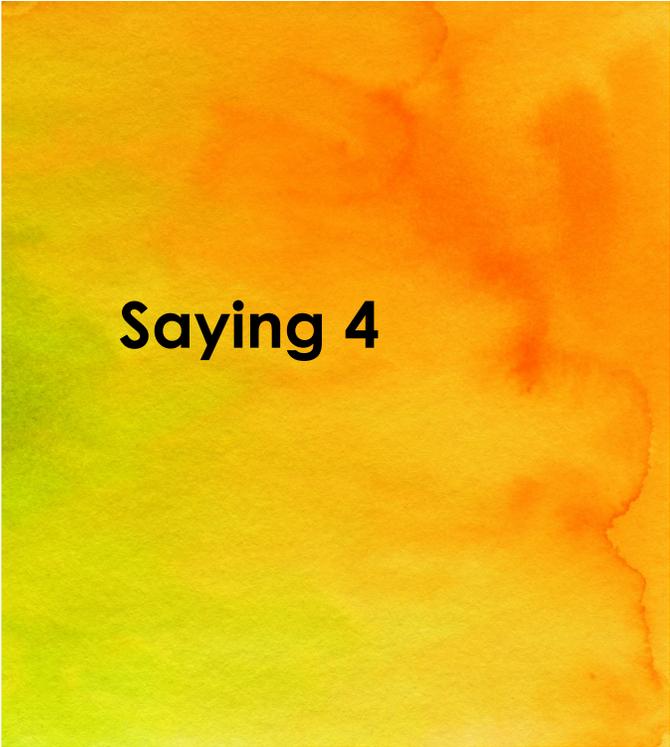


Saying 3



The kingdom
(or 'realm')
is within you.

like Luke 17:21

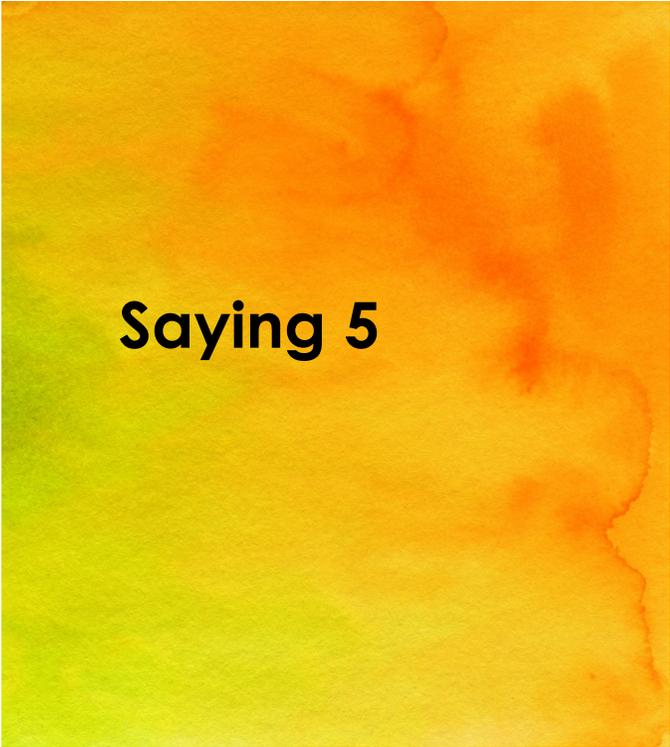


Saying 4



Many who are first
will become last.

Like Matthew 19:30,
Mark 10:31,
Luke 13:30



Saying 5



There is nothing
hidden that will
not become
obvious.

Like Matthew 10:26,
Mark 4:22,
Luke 8:17

How the Bible was put together without the Gospel of Thomas

- 1. There wasn't ever any big church council that decided for or against putting the Gospel of Thomas in the Bible.**
- 2. There aren't any Church Fathers or Mothers who criticized the Gospel of Thomas.**

When the Bible was written

1. All of the books of the Bible were written in the first two centuries.
2. Same range of dates as texts included in the New Testament.
3. It wasn't until the 6th through 9th centuries, a slow coming together of a real New Testament.
4. During the first 10 centuries, there was a small amount of criticism of the Gospel of Thomas.
5. Some confusion in the first 10 centuries between the Gospel of Thomas and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*.

Pause for questions, thoughts, push-back

***Was the Gospel of Thomas
excluded from the Bible
because it really was an evil
heresy?***

Timeline of events

- 1. 1897: Scholars discovered the papyrus fragments of the 'Lost Sayings of Jesus.'**
- 2. 1910: Mary Baker Eddy passed on.**
- 3. 1945: Gospel of Thomas is found in Egypt.**

1. The third event of this eventful period, — a period of such wonderful spiritual import to mankind! — was the advent of a higher Christianity.

From this dazzling, God-crowned summit, the Nazarene stepped suddenly before the people and their schools of philosophy; **Gnostic**, Epicurean, and Stoic.

He must stem these rising angry elements, and walk serenely over their fretted, foaming billows (Mis. Wr. 162).

2. *In 1903, Mrs. Eddy wrote to her cousin Alfred Baker,*

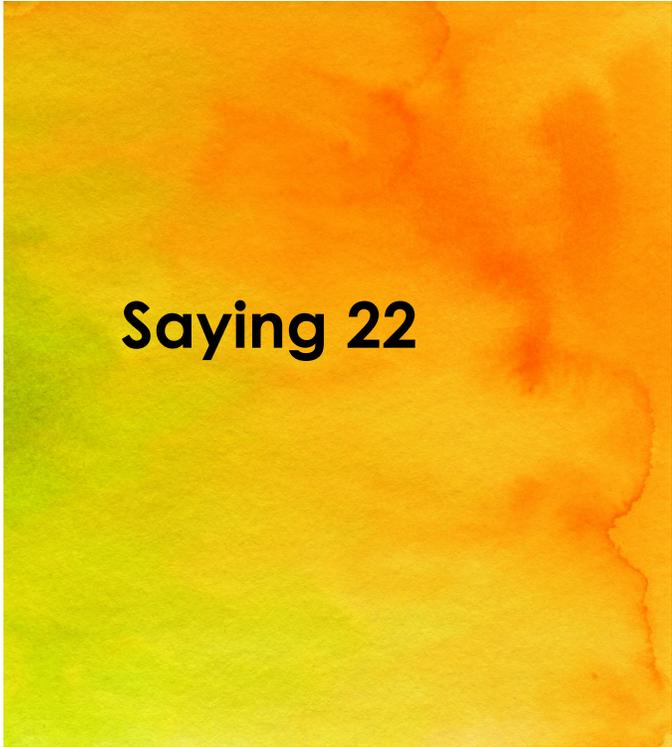
“O, I wish you could see a book just sent to me from a Prof. in Great Britain giving the words of Christ that have been found in a recently discovered Logia, recent excavation, and words not in the Canonical Gospels and 200 [300?] years before the Christian era!

These words **correspond precisely with some of my writings in Science and Health.** I only wish the students all would **awaken to see the wisdom of what God says** through His window.”

1945: The Gospel of Thomas discovered, but no one made the connection between this book and those early fragments.



- 1. 1945: Gospel of Thomas discovered, but no one made the connection between this book and those early fragments.**
- 2. In 1959: fragments of Sayings of Jesus were actually part of the Gospel of Thomas!**
- 3. In the 1960s, scholars began to identify the Gospel of Thomas as 'gnostic.'**



Saying 22



When you make the two
one, and when you make
the inside like the outside,
and the outside like the
inside, and the above like
the below.

And when you make the
male and the female into a
solitary one, so that the
male is not male nor the
female female. . . .
Then you will enter the
realm.

- 1. 1960s: Scholars argued back. “It’s a later gnostic reaction against the Bible!”**
- 1. 1970s: Scholars retort: “It really represents Jesus as a wise sage.”**
- 2. 1990s: “It *began* a trajectory of gnostic identity.”**
- 3. 2010s: Scholars less inclined to see early Gnosticism in the Gospel of Thomas.**



Today's
views

1) 'Gnosticism' is category in need of revision

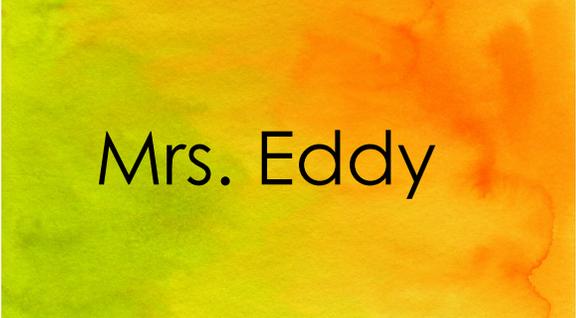
2) Much of what passed as strains of 'Gnosticism' in early texts now seen as part of resurging interest in Plato back in the 100s and 200s.

Plato?



Today's
views

- 1) 'Gnosticism' is category in need of revision
- 2) Much of what passed as strains of 'Gnosticism' in early texts now seen as part of resurging interest in Plato back in the 100s and 200s.
- 3) Other writings more defined as 'gnostic' include the conviction that the material world is a cosmic mistake, created by subordinate and rebellious creator god. This is not Gospel of Thomas.



Mrs. Eddy

1. She agreed with the best scholars of her day.
2. When she had a chance to see even a little scrap, what she saw “corresponded precisely with some of [her] writings.”
3. Once again, I find her right in line with the most current scholarship.

What is Gnosticism?

Dead Sea Scrolls



Nag
Hammadi
Library

What is Gnosticism?

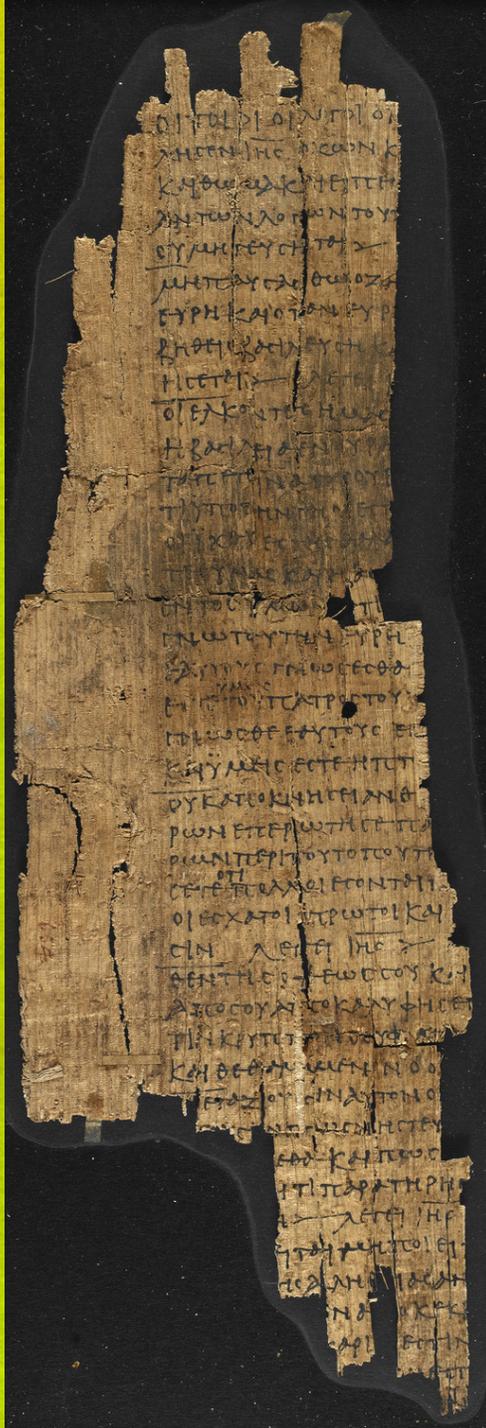
I don't know, but it's a heresy!

The image features a dark, irregular shape resembling a brush stroke or a torn piece of paper, set against a background of yellow and orange watercolor washes. The shape is roughly horizontal and occupies the central portion of the frame. The background is a gradient of warm colors, with yellow on the left and orange on the right, creating a soft, artistic atmosphere.

What is Heresy?

*Was there heresy in
the first two centuries?*

No, but now it depends on who you ask!



**What's *it* about the
Gospel of Thomas
that resonates with
Christian Science?**



Return
to
origins

The disciples said to Jesus: “Tell us about our future end.”

Jesus replied, “So you understand all about the beginning and now you look toward the end?

You will find the end at the beginning.

Whoever stands at the beginning is favored, for they will know the end and never die.”

Understanding
our
origins

Jesus said:

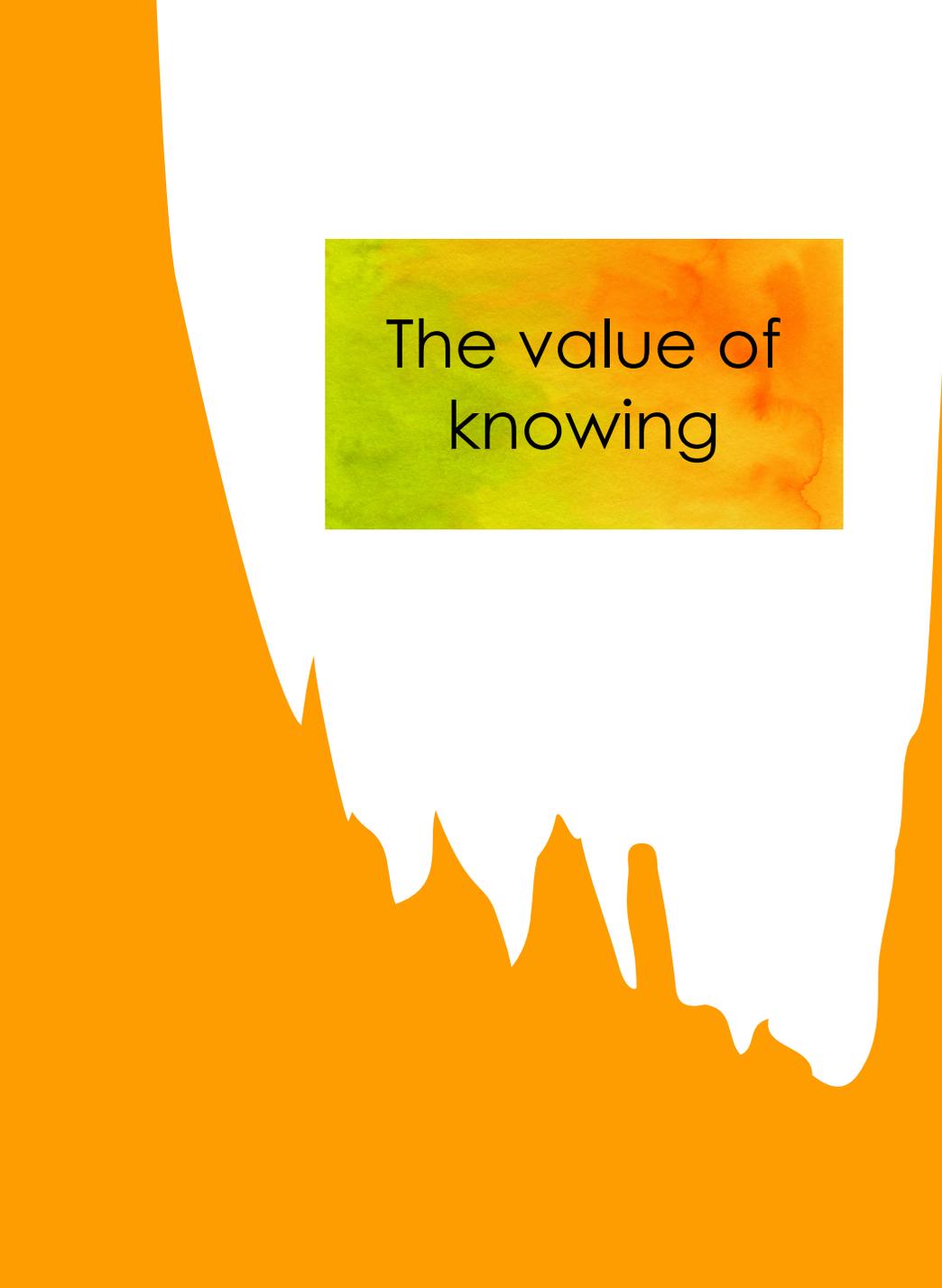
“When you give birth to the one within you, that one will save you.

If you do not have that one within you, that one will kill you.”

gnosis

gnostic

gnosticism



The value of
knowing

A woman in the crowd said to him,

“The womb that bore you and the breasts that nourished you are favored.”

He replied,

“those who heeded the father’s word and truly kept it are favored.”

Luke 11:27–28

While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!”

For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’

Jesus said to them:

“If you fast, you will produce sin for yourselves.

And if you pray, you will be condemned.

And if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.

And in whatever land you enter and in which you walk, if they receive you eat whatever is put before you, and **heal the sick among them.**

For, what goes into your mouth will not pollute you; rather, that which comes from your mouth will pollute you.

Matthew 6

Whenever you **give alms**, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever **you pray**, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And whenever **you fast**, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

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1. **Substance of his teaching or which came first?**

2. “If they receive you eat whatever is put before you, and heal the sick among them.”

3. And in whatever land you enter and in which you walk, **if they receive you** eat whatever is put before you, and heal the sick among them.

Thomas:

Jesus adds: “For, what goes into your mouth will not pollute you; rather, that which comes from your mouth will pollute you.”

Matthew:

“Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.

For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.

These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Why the Gospel of Thomas is so important for Christian Scientists



O, I wish you could see a book just sent to me... giving the words of Christ that have been found... in a recent excavation, and words not in the Canonical Gospels and 200 –[300?] years before the Christian era!”

These words correspond precisely...”

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As long as Christian Science continues to be (falsely) accused of being both gnostic and heretical, the issues are intertwined with the public reception to the Gospel of Thomas.

The Gospel of Thomas Goes Public

1. EarlyChristianTexts.com/courses
2. Udemy.com/gospel-of-thomas-goes-public
Coupon: PRINCIPIAONLY - \$9.99 until June 21

Thank you for journeying with me!

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