



The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE JOURNAL

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through
God to the pulling down of strong holds. —II Corinthians 10:4

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Welcome - October 2024

By Aaron Bingham

Dear Friend,

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes of the divine Mind, God, as “Deity, which outlines but is not outlined” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 591). There is great comfort and assurance in looking to God for His outlining of our lives, as seen in how God imparted to the prophets visions of the unspeakable good in store for all humanity.

Think about how Isaiah provided details about the coming Messiah centuries in advance. For example, he shared that the Master would be one who “openeth not his mouth” in affliction, like “a sheep before her shearers.” This prophecy of Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in Christ Jesus’ sublime example of answering not his enemies when brought before Pilate, shortly before he was sentenced to death. Yet centuries earlier it had also been foretold that he would overcome the grave, and he did that in his wondrous resurrection, giving us everlasting proof of unquenchable Life, God.

Or ponder how, in Isaiah 54, the prophet’s vision extends even further, and foresees “a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused,” who would rise past “the reproach of thy widowhood” to experience God’s “great mercies” and “everlasting kindness.” Isaiah voices the promise to her that “all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

That points to what you will find in the pages of this magazine. You will read of the “great peace” and healing of today’s “children taught of the Lord.” It is the peace, love, and joy that God outlines for all our lives, available here and now to every one of His dear children.

Aaron Bingham, Copy Editor

LETTERS

Readers respond

By Margaret Wylie, Jennifer Quinn, Melvyn Howe, Heather Bauer, Judi Lindsey, Gwendolyn Evans-Caldwell

August 2024 issue

Thank you for this wonderful issue. I have just finished listening to the whole thing and found it full of inspiration and healing. I can’t begin to specify all the good points that I heard. I am grateful that I can listen to it again—and again.

Margaret Wylie
Eastampton, New Jersey, US

Deb Hensley, “Who are you?” *Journal*, August 2024

Thank you for this article. What a timely answer to the current concerns over identity, whether defined by race, gender, body type, or other denominators. The author brings out so clearly that the source of our identity is spiritual, not material, and not based in a human personality or other human characteristics.

Jennifer Quinn
Abingdon, Virginia, US

Nathan Talbot, “Life and death: A colloquy,” *Journal*, July 2024

I love the great truth this article so clearly brings out—Life is God, God is All-in-all, therefore death is unreal and the only thing that can die is a lie.

Melvyn Howe
London, England

Merrilyn Hawke Jones, “A Reader prays in preparation,” *Journal*, July 2024

I shared this beautiful and very helpful poem with our group that meets once a month to support each other with writing for the periodicals, and also with giving testimonies or sharing Christian Science. It’s God and

“Love reflected in love,” right? One voice! So beautiful. Thank you to Merrilyn.

Heather Bauer
Suwanee, Georgia, US

**John Tyler, “The dependence that sets us free,”
*Journal, July 2024***

I loved John’s analogy of a child learning to be independent in contrast with us growing up and learning our true dependence on God! As a person who always prided herself on thinking independently and for herself, I had a wake-up call on how in reality I was totally dependent on God. And what a relief! Also, I loved the author’s deeper exploration of what knowing the truth that sets you free means. It’s not an intellectual exercise, but a deep understanding of our true spiritual essence and being. Thanks!

Judi Lindsey
Candia, New Hampshire, US

Todd Eastin, “You have a choice,” *Journal, July 2024*

Superb article—very helpful, very clear.

Gwendolyn Evans-Caldwell
Walpole, Maine, US

love for her so strongly, the illness disappeared. She was perfectly well and completely healed.

Her comment that “the feeling was the healing” really stood out to me. Since then, I have come to realize that, in the practice of Christian Science healing, it is the feeling one gets from drawing close to God—a feeling that carries with it the conviction of God’s eternal presence and power—that breaks the illusion of sickness or any other problem and results in healing.

The Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote a poem in which she posed a thought-provoking question: “Felt ye the power of the Word?” (*Poems*, p. 75). As a lifelong student of the Bible, she felt the importance and significance of God’s word. Throughout her life, she was often comforted by inspiration from the Scriptures. To her, they conveyed a constant source of might, peace, authority, and light.

God’s word is indeed powerful and continues to be felt in this age, providing guidance, certainty, strength, protection, wisdom, and health to both mind and body. In her book *Unity of Good*, Mrs. Eddy recounts a time when she felt so close to, so at one with, God, that she was able to instantly heal a serious illness. She wrote, “When I have most clearly seen and most sensibly felt that the infinite recognizes no disease, this has not separated me from God, but has so bound me to Him as to enable me instantaneously to heal a cancer which had eaten its way to the jugular vein” (p. 7).

The feeling that so binds us to God is possible because, spiritually speaking, nothing can “separate us from the love of God” (Romans 8:39). God is forever right with us. As we draw near to Him in our thought, we feel His nearness, thus establishing in consciousness a deep sense of our permanent oneness with our Maker.

The certain sense that all is well, that nothing can separate any one of us from God’s love, is a feeling like none other. Discerning the power of God’s word has helped me overcome extreme fear, provided light in the darkest of hours, given me hope in what appeared to be hopeless situations, shown me a way to go when I felt lost, and supplied strength and courage when I needed to be strong and brave. In every case this discernment resulted in spiritual growth and healing, whether of

FEATURE

The feeling is the healing

By Ron Mangelsdorf

Years ago, a friend shared with me a healing she experienced through prayer, which included a powerful sense that God was present and all was well. At the time, she remarked that the thing that stood out to her was the *feeling* she had. It was a calm and exalted assurance that there was nothing to fear and that everything was fine. She then said, “The feeling was the healing.” In other words, at the moment she felt the power of God’s

health issues, financial needs, employment problems, or relationship difficulties. Or it simply aided me in finding a sense of peace and joy and satisfaction in daily living.

I often think of feeling, not as the physical sense of touch, but as something much deeper—more as spiritual intuition. One thesaurus points out that *intuition* is synonymous with *feeling* and *discernment* (thesaurus.com). Spiritual intuition, spiritual discernment, is part of every child of God's divine inheritance. It's the innate spiritual ability we all possess to understand, immediately, the true nature and essence of the relation we each have to God. In everyday usage we're accustomed to hearing people say they had a "gut feeling" or they "just knew" something or, simply put, something "just felt right" at a particular moment. Intuition reveals what the Bible calls Emmanuel, or "God with us"—the Christ—a divine influence that is always with us.

The textbook of Christian Science, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, teaches that spiritual sense contradicts the material senses. So, in effect, when we are feeling close to God, we are actually contradicting any claim that would suggest we are separated from all that is good and holy and healthy.

To be able to contradict the senses is at the heart of healing. Feeling the power of God's word can quickly put to rest any human suggestion of a bad or scary feeling or a belief that we're somehow cut off from God, and replace that suggestion with a divine promise of something better, higher, and holier.

Many years ago, I got two calls on the same day from friends requesting that I pray for them. Both cases involved illness and suffering.

After praying specifically that day for each friend, I felt impelled to pray some more later that night. After the rest of the family went to bed, I headed back out to my home office, which was above our unattached garage.

As I prayed, I felt my heart and thought drawing closer and closer to God. When I was finished praying, I truly felt close to God. I was inspired and uplifted. I felt that

the prayerful treatment was done, and I was ready to go back to the house to go to bed.

Then something wonderful started to unfold. As I stepped out of the office, a beautiful sight appeared before my eyes—one bright shining star. The significance of that star was that it was the first star I had seen in months. In Alaska, where I live, the long summer days are too bright to see stars. But since summer was ending, it was finally dark enough to see a single star. I wanted to enjoy that moment for a while, so instead of going into the house, I decided to go for a little walk.

As I walked down our gravel road, I felt a strong sense of light filling my consciousness. The more I walked, the brighter it grew. I finally had to stop to try and understand the feeling I was experiencing. I felt the light in my thought was being manifested in my surroundings. I began to look around me, and as I turned, I saw the fullest, brightest moon I had ever seen popping up above the mountains. It's a sight I'll always remember and a feeling I will never forget. I felt at one with God and intuitively I was certain that my prayers had been answered.

The next morning, each of my friends called, and they both said the same thing. They mentioned that they had been physically struggling the night before, but then all of a sudden, all the symptoms disappeared and they were completely well. The most interesting thing was, they each noted the time their healing had taken place. In both cases, it was exactly the same time I had been standing in the road feeling at one with God and embraced by the light of a solitary star and a bright shining moon. Clearly, each of us was feeling the power of His Word at the same time. That clear sense of the light and presence of God, that feeling, was the healing.

Nowadays when I pray, what I most long for is this wondrous feeling of being close to God. That prayer is fulfilled in a beautiful peace of mind and an assurance that all is well.

What are we paying for?

By Lyon Osborn interviewed by the Journal's Lisa Rennie Sytsma

The September issue of the *Journal* carried the Annual Meeting financial report from the Treasurer of The Mother Church, Lyon Osborn. Many Church members expressed interest in hearing about Church finances in greater detail. In this interview, Lyon provides deeper insights on this topic.

Lisa: The Founder of The Church of Christ, Scientist, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote that the Church is “designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing” (*Church Manual*, p. 17). How does the Treasurer’s Office support the healing mission of Christian Science?

Lyon: In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mrs. Eddy describes the remarkable work required by her “to establish the stately operations of Christian Science” (p. 464). I believe the work we do in the Treasurer’s Office to properly manage and spend Mother Church funds supports stable and effective Mother Church activities, services, and publications. It reduces the potential for distractions and disagreements within the Church and in the Field that would arise if Church funds were not handled responsibly and appropriately. And, on a very basic level, it’s right that we carefully steward the financial contributions our members so lovingly make.

Article I, Section 9, of the *Manual*, “Duties of Church Officers,” explains that the Tenets and By-Laws of The Mother Church constitute its “proper system of government” (p. 28), and following them supports the Church in accomplishing what it’s designed to do, “healing and saving the world from sin and death” (*Manual*, p. 19). As an officer of the Church, the Treasurer has a solemn obligation to perform the

functions of the office efficiently and effectively in support of the global healing mission of Christian Science.

Which *Manual* By-Laws inform and govern the work of the Treasurer’s Office?

The primary responsibilities of the Treasurer’s Office are presented in Article XXIV of the *Manual*, “Guardianship of Church Funds.” We faithfully manage funds by properly accounting for, stewarding, investing, and reporting on them. This includes work to fulfill the Church’s audit requirements. We also focus on using Church funds wisely, which includes paying bills after they’re reviewed and endorsed by the Committee on Finance (three members of the Church appointed by the Board of Directors in accord with Article XXIV, Section 4), and making sure donations from the Church are properly authorized.

We turn to Section 5 of the Article a lot, which is called “God’s Requirement,” and that includes expressing “wisdom, economy, and brotherly love” in all of our work (p. 77). It is interesting to realize that this requirement applies not only to Mother Church officers but to “all the proceedings of the members of The Mother Church.”

Sometimes it’s tempting to buy into the human belief that these qualities could be in tension or incompatible; for instance, that we can’t be loving and economical at the same time. But we all learn through experience that this is not the case. Successful approaches to making wise decisions are characterized by the harmonious action of wisdom, economy, and love working together.

Other *Manual* By-Laws that inform and govern the Treasurer’s work include Article VIII, Section 13, Article XXV, Section 2, and Article XXX, Section 5, which cover receiving per capita tax payments, any net profits from The Christian Science Publishing Society, and surplus funds from the Board of Education. As you know, the Treasurer is also required to give a report at each Annual Meeting of The Mother Church (see Article XIII, Section 1).

Mrs. Eddy cared deeply about managing and spending Church funds responsibly and effectively, and I've gained a tremendous appreciation and respect for our Leader's inspired requirements for safeguarding Church funds. They remain as relevant today as they were more than a century ago.

Do you find directives in the Bible and *Science and Health* that relate to your work and govern your decisions?

The Ten Commandments are a great starting place for me. And I find the first and second particularly relevant: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" and "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:3, 4). If we love and worship money, if we accept the conventional belief that money is the source of substance and satisfaction, if we are tempted to worship money like some sort of idol, we are breaking these commandments. So it's critical to be clear about money's role in our work. Money is merely a tool. As a way to store value and as a medium of exchange, money facilitates the vital healing work of our Church.

The Ten Commandments also prohibit stealing, so honesty and integrity are essential in managing Church funds. The highest standard of ethics is required. Just as the disciples were instructed by Christ Jesus, we too must be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). We need to be alert and discerning, striving to follow the Golden Rule of loving our neighbor as ourself.

As I mentioned at this year's Annual Meeting, I've been thinking a lot about Joseph's experience in Egypt, when he was led by God to interpret Pharaoh's dream and wisely set aside a portion of the harvests during the seven years of plenty. Similar to how Joseph saved surplus crops, we're currently preserving the Church's ample savings to generate income to cover the cost of significant activities today and tomorrow. We're expecting, but still working to demonstrate, natural sustained growth in the whole Christian Science movement, including growth in donations and subscriptions to the periodicals.

I've also witnessed in my work contemporary examples of God's loving provision along the lines of the inspired

question Elisha asked a poor widow: "What hast thou in the house?" (II Kings 4:2). Twenty years ago, the Church confronted rising unsustainable costs to maintain and operate the approximately 14 acres of land and buildings that comprise the Christian Science Plaza. Like the poor widow, Church workers were guided to realize what God had already provided. Their prayers led to an inspired plan to free up underutilized spaces for leasing.

This required courage, conviction, and humility. Grounded in metaphysics and diligently implemented, the resulting transformation bore fruit beyond what anyone had anticipated. It has blessed the Church and everyone who benefits from the products, programs, and services the Church provides in Boston and to the world.

We need to consistently handle the false belief that anything other than God, Spirit, is the true substance sustaining our Church. One of my favorite passages to turn to in *Science and Health* is Mrs. Eddy's answer to the question "What is substance?" which includes, "Spirit, the synonym of Mind, Soul, or God, is the only real substance" (p. 468).

Could you share how you pray about The Mother Church's finances, both in general and when you've had key decisions to make?

I pray to know that the Church has, and always will have, the resources required to accomplish its holy purpose. Just as Jesus demonstrated with the loaves and fishes, we can trust God, divine Love, to provide what's needed, when it's needed. I realize that this doesn't relieve us of our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources we have, or to follow God's requirement of operating with wisdom, economy, and brotherly love. And it certainly doesn't guarantee that we'll have the resources to accomplish what we personally want to do. But we always have what we need to accomplish whatever God requires us to do.

Just like Joseph in Egypt during the seven years of plenty, we have to be receptive and obedient to God's direction. And we can know with certainty that God always provides our Church with the resources it needs to accomplish the work He requires—"... Spirit, not

matter, being the source of supply,” as our Leader explains in *Science and Health* (p. 206).

I also pray to remove apparent barriers that seem to prevent Church members who are trying to fulfill their *Manual* responsibilities from doing so. Unfortunately, due to current laws and banking system regulations, there remain parts of the world where it is extremely challenging, if not impossible, to make a per capita tax payment or subscribe to the periodicals. Until we overcome these issues, The Mother Church is supporting other ways for Christian Scientists in those areas to have access to the healing publications and services of our Church.

When making key decisions, whether related to a difficult personnel matter or an important recommendation to the Board of Directors, I strive to listen quietly for God’s direction and follow Christ Jesus’ example to pray, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” I also pray to demonstrate that “whatever blesses one blesses all” (*Science and Health*, p. 206). This includes trusting that decisions that seem difficult, if based on Principle and Love (which are synonyms for God), cannot harm anyone. They can only bless all involved.

You mentioned at the 2024 Annual Meeting that sometimes members wonder why they should contribute when The Mother Church is in good financial shape. What more can you say about that?

Two reasons The Mother Church is sound financially are that the Church is responsibly managing its spending, and that Church members are generously supporting the Church financially. As I explained in this year’s Annual Meeting report, financial support from Church members—including per capita tax payments and other contributions, subscription payments, and generous provisions many make for the Church in their wills—currently pays for a substantial portion of the Church’s expenditures. (The balance is covered by income generated from savings and real estate leases.) So members’ financial support is an essential component of sustaining the current activities and services of The Mother Church.

It’s interesting that our Leader set a very low threshold for member per capita tax payments—just one dollar

each year. She didn’t require a substantial amount, such as tithing a percentage of one’s income. But she did ask members to take time at least once a year to express gratitude for the Science she discovered and for the Church she founded by giving at least a dollar to the Church. And it’s humbling to receive extraordinary expressions of gratitude from members around the world, however modest, just as when Jesus observed a poor widow casting two mites into the treasury and pointed out to his disciples the significance of her giving “all that she had” (see Mark 12:41–44). We are blessed to hear individuals tell of how obedience to the *Manual* provisions regarding paying the annual per capita tax and subscribing to the periodicals (see Article VIII, Sections 13 and 14) supports their practice of the Science of healing.

How does the Treasurer’s Office prioritize how and where money is spent? Are other Church officers involved?

According to the *Manual*, the Christian Science Board of Directors is responsible for determining how, where, and when money is spent, since it transacts the business of The Mother Church (see Article I, Section 6). But the Treasurer shares responsibility with the Directors for making sure funds are properly distributed. In practice, this means the Treasurer’s Office diligently informs, advises, and makes recommendations to the Directors on Church budget matters. We ensure that spending is reasonable, has been appropriately authorized by the Directors, and is endorsed by the Committee on Finance. Among other duties, the Committee monitors and approves all Church expenditures and sees to it that the Church books are “audited annually by an honest, competent accountant” (*Manual*, p. 77).

Is there anything more you can share about The Mother Church’s management of funds?

Income from Church savings serves an important role in the Church’s finances today, and a lot of work and prayer goes into stewarding them. I couldn’t be more grateful for a small, dedicated investment staff of Christian Scientists, as well as a handful of experienced Church members who prayerfully provide practical advice and guidance on how best to invest

Church funds. We also employ professional investment managers who share the Church's ethical standards. They respect and support the Church's unique approach, including avoiding investing in industries not consistent with the theology of Christian Science, such as pharmaceuticals, tobacco, and alcohol. In general, we find it prudent to diversify our investments, similar to how many colleges and universities invest their savings today.

What can you share about the current thinking regarding the financial support of *The Christian Science Monitor*?

The Church provides considerable financial support for the global operations of the *Monitor*. However, the *Manual* and the Deed of Trust of The Christian Science Publishing Society indicate an expectation that the Publishing Society, which includes the *Monitor*, operate with a positive financial balance.

Every Christian Scientist has an integral role to play in achieving this balance by taking to heart Mrs. Eddy's desire "that every Christian Scientist, and as many others as possible, subscribe for and read our daily newspaper" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, pp. 352–353).

As the *Manual* states, subscribing "for the periodicals which are the organs of this Church" is a "privilege and duty" (p. 44). It's a practical way to financially support and underwrite Mrs. Eddy's intent for each of the periodicals to bless humanity. In the case of the *Monitor*, it is to "spread undivided the Science that operates unspent" (*Miscellany*, p. 353).

I find that by covering the trials and victories of our neighbors around the world, and by reporting credible evidence of God's law of progress and good, the *Monitor* encourages and expands my practice of Christian Science to embrace the world. To the extent that the *Monitor*—as well as the *Journal*, *Christian Science Sentinel*, and *The Herald of Christian Science*—supports our selfless practice of Christian Science, all of humanity benefits.

Carved into the stone on the outside of the Publishing House building is this quotation from Psalms: "The Lord

gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalms 68:11). We are all part of that great company, and we are each essential contributors to its success.

Since the Church has so much money, why does it charge for the *Christian Science Quarterly Bible Lessons*, subscriptions to the periodicals, and copies of *Science and Health* and the Bible? Couldn't it just give them away for free?

Mrs. Eddy recognized that those who pay what they can for something that brings healing and uplift—those who truly value what they are receiving—reap the most benefit themselves. For instance, in *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* she explains, "Christian Science demonstrates that the patient who pays whatever he is able to pay for being healed, is more apt to recover than he who withholds a slight equivalent for health" (p. 300). Doesn't this apply to paying for all the healing Christian Science publications as well?

During Mrs. Eddy's time, and for many decades after her passing, a significant portion of the Church's financial support was generated by profits from publishing. While we haven't seen such a balance for a number of decades, the Church's financial stability is still supported by revenues from publishing. The Church and the Publishing Society are striving to publish efficiently in contemporary ways, demonstrate editorial excellence, and price products and publications affordably. In return, our Leader expected those reading Christian Science literature to value it and support its publication through payments and subscriptions.

For those who would like to subscribe to or purchase Christian Science publications but don't feel able to right now, are there avenues for them to have access to those resources?

Yes, the Church currently offers a Literature Support Program (LSP) to help ensure that financial need isn't a barrier to an individual's study and progress in Christian Science. You can find information about this program at christianscience.com/literature-support-program.

Are there any questions we haven't asked that you'd like to answer?

I don't think so! But I do want to express my gratitude for Mrs. Eddy providing wise and inspired guidance regarding Church funds. I also want to thank all the dedicated workers at The Mother Church who responsibly manage and use Church funds to advance the Cause of Christian Science, including devoted colleagues in the Treasurer's Office. And I'm humbled by the remarkable expressions of gratitude for Science, and for the Church that promotes it, represented by Church members' generous contributions to The Mother Church from around the world.

ARTICLES

Rejecting lies about our character

By *Dulcinea Braga Dias Bueno Torres*

Originally published in Portuguese

When actors play their role convincingly, we believe that they are the character they portray. Even though we know it's an act, their performance can be so convincing that it affects us emotionally.

In a similar way, personal sense—the false, material sense of ourselves, others, and our experience—can seem even more convincing. It presents a scenario and persuades us that we are the proud hero, the evil villain, or the helpless victim—and we respond accordingly.

But Christian Science shows that material existence isn't the reality of being. The reality is that each one of us is spiritual, created by God, and lovingly cared for every moment. God is infinite good, embracing His all-good creation, so there is never a time when we are left to contend with circumstances or conditions on our own. Whatever seems to be unjust, frustrating, or frightening does not come from God, but is a product of the material senses that has no actual power over us

—unless we believe it. Regardless of the drama being presented, our role is to understand and express our true individuality as God's child.

To do this, it's important to choose which thoughts we entertain. Thoughts that are harmonious, intelligent, useful, joyful, and peaceful have their source in divine Mind, who created us. Thoughts that are fearful, discordant, judgmental, angry, or condemning of ourselves or others do not belong to us, for God is not their source. They are coming from a false sense of a mind or individuality separate from God, in the Scriptures called by Paul the “carnal mind”; in Christian Science, it is referred to as “mortal mind.”

For several years after starting my study of Christian Science, I would realize, to my surprise and disappointment, that I often felt anger about commonplace events, and that it was difficult to return to a state of equilibrium, joyfulness, and lightness of heart that is natural to us as God's loved children. Whenever anger arose, it was uncomfortable, so I prayed, and the feeling would go away. One time the anger was so strong that it caused physical discomfort. Prayer brought healing after a few days, as well as the recognition that anger is a false character trait that is not part of anyone's God-given identity.

With dedicated study of the Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, as well as daily living of what I was learning from these books, I stopped feeling anger for a long time. And then one day some years ago, I was working as a Christian Science nurse and felt my temper flare up as daily tasks were being assigned to us. I noticed that I was being given an assignment that would require me to practice new skills, and soon I was so overwhelmed that I could barely think. It was as if I was being devoured by anger.

But then a Bible verse came to me: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). I knew that this anger was not coming from divine Love. It was a “false prophet”—a lie about my character—so I had divine authority to reject it. I prayerfully denied every thought that would justify the feeling of anger

about this learning opportunity, and began to regain my equilibrium.

As David did when he faced Goliath in battle, I used all the “stones” I had at my disposal, such as the Lord’s Prayer, hymns from the *Christian Science Hymnal*, and “the scientific statement of being” from page 468 of Mrs. Eddy’s book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. These helped me hold to the truth of my purity as the image and likeness of God until I finally found my peace. I was able to think clearly about the situation and to feel gratitude for the opportunity to learn and practice new skills.

Looking at the whole experience more deeply, I realized the importance of watching our thoughts closely to detect the false character traits that personal sense attributes to us—such as shyness, moodiness, laziness, pride, insubordination, disorganization, anger, self-gratification, and forgetfulness. It’s a universal belief that everyone has flaws, that they are just part of being human. But God did not make *human* beings with separate, erring minds and a mixture of good and bad traits. The offspring of God are spiritual and reflect all the wholesome qualities of the one divine Mind, and nothing else.

So-called human faults are false labels, not laws, so we don’t have to accept them as belonging to us and consequently act them out. To believe that we can’t help ourselves because we were created with these failings or sins would dishonor God. Mrs. Eddy says in *Science and Health*: “Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death. The real man cannot depart from holiness, nor can God, by whom man is evolved, engender the capacity or freedom to sin.... In divine Science, God and the real man are inseparable as divine Principle and idea” (pp. 475, 476).

As the perfect reflection of God, man expresses divinely derived qualities such as discernment, patience, obedience, humility, love, and the desire to be useful and serve God in a way that blesses all.

I’ve been able to defuse the impulse to be angry by realizing that it is a deception of personal sense, an unreal drama, not part of my true nature as a child of God. Even when letting go of a false sense requires

effort, I am very grateful for these lessons in living divine Love. We can and should correct whatever would prevent us from reflecting Love, because this reflection is our role in God’s creation, the very reason for our being.

A divine afflatus brings a new view of church

By Karen Neff

Arriving early one Sunday morning to support prayerfully the service of my local branch Church of Christ, Scientist, I noticed gulls rising, floating, and soaring outside the church edifice as the gentle wind currents actively lifted them.

This reminded me of what my mother had taught me about God when I was a child. She explained that God, Spirit, was like the wind, which couldn’t be seen but whose effects could be observed in ripples on the water, leaves rustling in the trees, or flowers dancing in a field. From a very early age, I learned to look for evidence of God in the smile of a friend or in a gentle hand reaching out. Now the movement of the gulls reminded me that God is present and active right here and now.

It also reminded me of what our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, referred to as “the healing promise and potency of a present spiritual *afflatus*” (*Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 31). She explains further: “It was the gospel of healing, on its divinely appointed human mission, bearing on its white wings, to my apprehension, ‘the beauty of holiness,’—even the possibilities of spiritual insight, knowledge, and being” (p. 32).

Wings, breath, and wind are all symbols of the Holy Ghost, or divine Spirit, which stirs and lifts and inspires thought. It is a divine afflatus, which by definition is “a divine creative impulse or inspiration” (Oxford Languages). The currents of wind moving the gulls and

lifting them to soar to new heights, taking them higher and higher, to me symbolized this unseen influence of the Holy Ghost.

It became clear that right here in this church was evidence of a divine afflatus as well. This breath of inspiration moves and lifts and heals and is understood to be divine Science or Christian Science operating both seen and unseen in the world today. This Science is ever at work elevating and stirring thought to new heights of spiritual understanding and divine healing.

As I prayerfully embraced this dawn-fresh inspiration, I realized that the all-power of the Holy Ghost and Christ is fully capable of inspiring and healing each member of the congregation at our church services each week. I suddenly saw Christian Science in a new light, not as a small denominational religion, but as Christ's Christianity, healing and blessing all mankind. Seen in this light, the Christ Science is neither irrelevant, fading, nor ineffective, nor can it be blithely passed by or cavalierly dismissed.

The teachings of Christ Jesus are still being taught and practiced today through Christian Science. Students of Christian Science are learning to heal as he did, and anything that says otherwise is a blatant fabrication of the so-called carnal mind that is the hatred of Christ, Truth. The spiritual law of God, titled Christian Science, represents the cutting edge of thought in the world today, and those who follow and practice this law are modern-day disciples.

While to the material senses, there seems to be only a modest number of congregants at the church services, to spiritual sense, the church is a complete idea that cannot be diminished. A Bible verse is commanding in its question: "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:24). Because God is infinite and ever present, His presence fills the church sanctuaries, and churches are naturally filled with His Word and His infinite, spiritual manifestation, man.

These observations deeply inspired me and moved me to an elevated level of spiritual understanding as I realized that a whole new concept of church was dawning in my consciousness. Each congregant, I saw, represented the divine idea of God, which Jesus so

perfectly embodied as Christ. Each was, in reality, the infinite manifestation of an infinite God, of divine Love, and there was no building or structure that could encompass this idea except for the structure of universal Truth and Love which Mrs. Eddy defined as *Church* (see *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 583).

Something moved in me that morning, and I knew I could never go back to thinking of my local branch church as "our little church," endearing as that may sound. That morning a real and tangible dynamic took place during the service. I could feel the divine energy of Spirit elevating the congregation as we all sang, "Praise the Lord, ye heavens, adore Him" (*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 282). There was a real power and presence that was enlivening, invigorating, elevating, and healing all that were present, just as the currents of air had lifted the gulls.

While the hymns lifted our hearts to praise God, the solo was like a jet taxiing down a runway and gaining speed to lift us all to new spiritual heights of inspiration, preparing us to receive the message contained in that week's Bible Lesson, to be read that morning. These readings from the Bible and *Science and Health* were infused with authority and depth, transforming and renewing all who were present. God's law, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5), was being fulfilled, and we were all witnessing and experiencing it together.

I had taken a seat near the rear of the church where I could use a pillow to support a painful arm. The arm had been troubling me for weeks, and I had been praying for healing. Now, as the spirit of inspiration pulsed through me and lifted me, the arm became painless and light. I was unaware of what was taking place at the time, only that we were all being lifted together in this holy hour. It wasn't until later that I realized the healing of my arm had taken place at the church service that morning.

The epiphany of a new view of a universally triumphant Church may be brief, but it is also life-changing and healing and available to all. Christian Science healing is the highest visible manifestation of the Word of God in the world today. It illustrates the law of divine Love, the

power of divine Principle, working on behalf of God's beloved children. It is not only for students of Christian Science but for the benefit of humanity worldwide.

As we come to recognize and appreciate this fact, we will find Christ Jesus' scriptural promise being fulfilled: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Then our church services that forever bless and heal will increasingly be seen as the dawning of Christ, Truth, in human consciousness right here today, lifting all to new divine heights—just like wind lifting the gulls.

Is my healing possible?

By Lynn Jackson

Sometimes it may feel like a problem we're facing is incurable—like it's just not possible to be healed. Yet Christian Science teaches that there is no incurable disease or situation, because "all reality is in God and His creation, harmonious and eternal. That which He creates is good, and He makes all that is made" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 472).

Therefore, all that is imperfect has no source in God and is false, erroneous, and powerless. Moreover, imperfection, anything that God did not make, must yield to the corrective power of Truth, another name for God. Why is that? Because whatever is erroneous has no staying power; only God, good, has permanence and power. It's scientifically true that whatever is erroneous is corrected by Truth.

Jesus certainly proved this in his healing practice. He consistently proved material law to be insubstantial, powerless to attach sickness and sin to the individual. He demonstrated that only the law of God has authority.

In the Revelation of St. John, the Christ is recorded as saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any

man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (3:20). Christ, the true idea of God, consistently knocks at the door of human consciousness. Hearing Christ speak to us nourishes our spiritual sense. We discern what is true, what is real, what is permanent.

Messages of good from God do not originate in matter or because of a need. They are always present within divine Mind, God, and Mind's spiritual creation, man—the sons and daughters of God. This is why it's possible to hear these messages and to be nourished by them: because man reflects all that God knows. He feeds us with right ideas that bring healing.

Christ is present here and now, and in spiritually scientific prayer we hear it telling us what is true and real. This brings tangible blessings to our experience as we yield to the power of God.

Yet, human consciousness often struggles against these spiritually scientific and provable truths. Why? Because human consciousness is a supposed mixture of good and evil. It is the field of tares and wheat that Christ Jesus spoke of, in which only the good is harvested for food.

The task at hand is to gather the tares in thought and eliminate them—to reject false, material beliefs—while letting the wheat, the good in consciousness, multiply and mature. Through Christian Science, we are able to winnow consciousness, to separate the real from the unreal, and experience healing. But how does that work?

Recently, while teaching a Sunday School class of little ones, I asked them if they knew the difference between good thoughts and bad thoughts. I could tell they were wanting to learn. So, we discussed examples of bad thoughts and good thoughts. They caught on quickly and still love the question "Good thought or bad thought?" In fact, recently I heard one pupil say to another, who was upset and acting out, "You need to think good thoughts. This is just animal magnetism!" (*Animal magnetism* is a term used in Christian Science to refer to the supposed opposite of God.) Now, if something starts going awry in class, I simply have to ask, "Good thought or bad thought?" and

the children immediately come back into line. Is it any more difficult with an adult? It shouldn't be. It needn't be.

When we are facing a “bad thought,” or what Mrs. Eddy refers to as “aggressive mental suggestion” (see *Manual of The Mother Church*, p. 42), might we not, like those little ones, ask, “Good thought or bad thought?” and then immediately correct our thinking and actions? Too simple? Too naive? Too childlike? No. It's just the right approach, even in dealing with an error that may have started as a suggestive snake but appears to have grown into a vicious dragon—a very aggressive but still erroneous suggestion.

Christ speaks to the childlike thought, regardless of age. It is present here and now. It whispers to us the holiness and perfection of God and man. Or it may roar like a lion to get our attention. However we hear it, we can hear it and follow it, because it cannot be ignored. No message from God to man can truly be lost, forgotten, or unheard. It not only comes with the demand but also imparts the ability and willingness needed for the demand to be fulfilled.

Opening thought to the laws of Truth and their application enables us to receive Truth. This receptivity reveals spiritual reality, the kingdom of God at hand, and thought is changed—moved from its basis in mortal mind or error to the true basis of Spirit. Accepting the glorious presence and love of God, even in the midst of storms of error, results in healing.

Resistance from mortal mind—the carnal or material mind—may seem to hide the light of Christ and leave us in the shadows of fear. It may claim to speak louder, be bigger, and be more powerful than God, or even be the only power, the only mind, the only reality. But it's unreal, merely a false suggestion. Mrs. Eddy notes: “Evil is nothing, no thing, mind, nor power. As manifested by mankind it stands for a lie, nothing claiming to be something,—for lust, dishonesty, selfishness, envy, hypocrisy, slander, hate, theft, adultery, murder, dementia, insanity, inanity, devil, hell, with all the etceteras that word includes” (*Science and Health*, p. 330).

Evil says nothing real about our God-given being. It merely lies.

We can remember, when we face situations that appear long and hard, that error is always eliminated by the all-presence of infinite Truth. Again, *Science and Health* states, “Truth, Life, and Love are a law of annihilation to everything unlike themselves, because they declare nothing except God” (p. 243). Every least detail of error has no choice but to yield to infinite Truth, because no error, however dark, can withstand the light which Christ shines, revealing the ever-presence and power of Truth.

There is no incurable disease because there is no incurable state or stage of consciousness. We don't need matter's or mortal mind's permission to be healed. We don't need time, or personal worthiness, or hours and hours of reading and prayer. Our demonstration is purely spiritual and is determined by the law of Truth alone, which dissolves all false beliefs and brings healing.

Years ago, after settling the estate of a family member who had passed away unexpectedly, I returned home overwhelmed by a very heavy cold. I had promised a close friend that I would fly to her city and drive her to a speaking engagement in another city. Feeling unable to do this, I called my friend and told her not to count on me. But by the end of the conversation I had recommitted to the engagement. While I was flying to her city, one of my ears became extremely painful, and I became resentful that my friend had pressured me into honoring my commitment, especially since I was feeling so ill and had just lost a loved one.

Weeks later, after the cold had passed, I noticed the ear was plugged, and for many years after that the ear was often plugged and my hearing out of it wasn't always normal. Then one day, after being aware of this issue again, I humbly turned to God. Through prayer, I saw the level of resentment and anger I had been holding. I awakened to the scientific fact that neither resentment nor anger nor an ear condition could be part of my true being. I saw that the problem with my ear was merely a false belief, not a condition of the body, and it had no staying power in my consciousness. Scientifically

affirming that error always yields to Truth, I felt free of the erroneous thoughts.

Later, when I was blowing my nose, the ear opened, and it has remained open ever since. Opening thought to the ever-present Christ, the spiritual idea of Truth, healed me.

Christian Science treatment draws on the healing power of Truth and proves the spiritual, scientific fact that error always yields to Truth.

A brighter world

By Douglas Sytsma

Jesus did not change sick people into well people. He understood that in reality no one has ever been unwell in any way.

How did Jesus' spiritual understanding cause the corporeal senses to give up their false testimony of sin, disease, and death? In the Christian Science textbook, Mary Baker Eddy gives this explanation: "Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, pp. 476–477).

Jesus perceived, through spiritual sense, what God knows of the man of His own creating, right where others—who believed that the corporeal senses depicted reality—erroneously saw a sick, sinful, or dying material man. Jesus trusted that God was always keeping everyone perfectly well, because everyone lives in God under His loving and omnipotent care. As the psalmist wrote, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalms 139:7–10).

Christian Science reveals that God, who is wholly perfect and good, is the only cause and creator. He is Spirit, and created all spiritually. Therefore a so-called corporeal existence—life and intelligence in matter—must be nothing more than a false sense or dream.

No one truly was ever born into, lived in, or died out of this dream, for God's creation is forever embraced in His perfection—the only reality. "The testimony of the corporeal senses cannot inform us what is real and what is delusive, but the revelations of Christian Science unlock the treasures of Truth" (*Science and Health*, p. 70).

When I first started receiving calls for help as a Christian Science practitioner—requests to pray about a problem that a person was experiencing—I would feel a heavy responsibility if the problem was considered a serious or major one. I knew that Christ, the divine manifestation of God forever voicing good, was always supplying the healing inspiration needed. But I also erroneously believed that after the call for help, a battle would ensue between the problem and my own personal power to attune my thought to that inspiration.

As I prayed about this, I realized that I was right to believe that my own personal power was inadequate to heal. Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). Spiritually scientific prayer involves witnessing the patient as the image of God. That image of God never has a problem, never has a disease, never lacks anything needful or truly desirable, and has never sinned. He can have nothing that needs healing. The belief that he is sick or sinful is an illusion of the corporeal senses. To agree that that illusion is a reality which needs to be cast out by personal ability is to be deluded.

I decided to keep thoughts about myself completely out of my prayers. And I no longer treated the patient as sick or suffering. Why? Because the patient is already perfectly well, exactly as God made her or him to be. I stick to treating the erroneous claim that the individual can ever have a problem of any sort.

All power to affect our well-being belongs solely to our God, and He maintains us forever harmonious, well, and free. No practitioner, not even Christ Jesus, has ever been able to affect one iota of any man's real being, which is already perfect. In healing, nothing that is real changes, even though the corporeal senses stop testifying to discord and disease. The health and holiness that appear were actually there all along.

When the senses depict discord, we can see it as just an invitation to purify and spiritually exalt our thinking. As Mrs. Eddy writes in her poem "Christ My Refuge,"

O'er waiting harpstrings of the mind
There sweeps a strain,
Low, sad, and sweet, whose measures
bind
The power of pain,

And wake a white-winged angel throng
Of thoughts, illumed
By faith, and breathed in raptured song,
With love perfumed.

Then His unveiled, sweet mercies show
Life's burdens light.
I kiss the cross, and wake to know
A world more bright.
(*Poems*, p. 12)

The only importance of any discordant experience is that it gives us motivation to study Christian Science more deeply and practice it more effectively. Then the world—and our experience—will thereafter be more bright.

Good is within the reach of all

By Mari G. De Milone

Originally published in Spanish

The remarkable Old Testament story of Sarah's servant Hagar is one worth revisiting. Difficulties in the home prompted Abraham, Sarah's husband, to send Hagar and her son away into the wilderness with only a bottle of water and some bread. It's not hard to imagine that Hagar must have felt abandoned and concerned about how to feed her child (see Genesis 21:9–21).

When the bottle of water was empty, she moved away from her son, because she did not want to see him die. But even in the midst of that absolute despair, this mother came to understand that the boy had a direct relationship to God. An angel—a divine message—told her, "God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." Hagar and the child were then saved. The Bible reports, "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink."

The angel message had ordered Hagar to "lift up" the boy. Seen through Christian Science, the angel message was telling Hagar to lift up her thought of the boy and to behold the source of his life: God, divine Life, the only Life. She had to see that his life could not be lost. The most remarkable thing to me about this story is that the much-needed water was already there. Hagar's despair had prevented her from seeing that the solution had always been within her reach. A lesson for us today is that God's answer is always near.

There's a story that has been in my family for some generations. It tells of a relative about a century ago who had been left alone with her youngest children while her husband and two eldest went to war. Soon, she no longer had anything to feed her children. In despair, she went out to the fields with them, perhaps in search of something that would ease their hunger. When she found nothing, she went toward a nearby mountain, leaned against one of the trees, and began to cry, while trying not to let her children see her tears. She then pleaded with God to help her in this time of

great need. She had barely finished her plea, when she felt something fall at her feet from the branches. She leaned down and right there in front of her was a gold doubloon among the greenery. She would be able to purchase food with that valuable coin. What wonderful joy and gratitude she must have felt overflowing in her heart!

This story may have several explanations, but the most reasonable is this: There was an abundance of crows in that region, and some believe these birds to be attracted to shiny objects, and to take them to their nests; we think the coin must have fallen out of the nest of one of these birds.

If we find ourselves blinded by fear, it is not easy to be aware of the immediacy of the divine response. But as this story shows, despite the difficulties we may be experiencing, God's presence is tangible right where we are and meets our needs.

This reminds me of a Bible verse that I love: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). Just as with Hagar, it's impossible to be aware of the availability of good when we are blinded by anguish and despair. Other times, we may want our need to be met in a certain way, and when it appears in a way we don't expect, we think that we have been denied aid.

On more than one occasion I have felt very close to both Hagar and the woman in the doubloon story. There have been times when the desperation to get something I really needed has led me to ask God for it with all my heart, even in tears.

On some occasions, when my financial situation was very difficult, I would find money that had been forgotten in the pocket of some clothing or in a purse, which covered the need of the moment. One time, my husband and I were kept awake for several nights, because we urgently needed to find new housing. When we prayed and affirmed that the love of God, our Father-Mother, would not allow His beloved children to be left helpless, we found our answer. Within a few days we were led to a beautiful home with the necessary amenities to lodge our family.

As stated in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, written by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (p. 494). Through my study of this Science, I have come to understand that God meets everyone's needs; exactly as evidenced by the stories of Hagar and the woman who found the gold doubloon. In reality, God's spiritual and complete creation does not lack anything.

The woman who found the coin petitioned a God that she didn't really know, but that she intuitively knew would answer her. That God, I have learned, is supreme good, the God that Christian Science urges us to know and love. How wonderful it is to know that divine Love is infinite! It spans the ages, supplies all needs, and reaches the heart that sincerely seeks an answer in God.

"There are no vacuums"

By Ana Paula Carrubba

In my sadness after a very dear friend passed away, I told a colleague I was dreading the upcoming Fourth of July celebration. That was because my friend—someone I thought of as family—would always invite me to watch the fireworks with her and other friends at her house. This year, I wanted to escape and spend the holiday out of town to avoid feeling lonely and sad. I didn't want to be reminded of all the memories we'd had together.

My colleague said simply, "There are no vacuums." He was quoting a passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science (p. 346). These four brief words had an immediate comforting effect on me. They helped me see this spiritual truth: In reality, there is nothing missing—so, no emptiness, no vacuum—because God, who is good, is everywhere and all.

It occurred to me as I prayed that since we can never be apart from the one infinite God, then we cannot

be apart from each other. Though loved ones may move away or appear to pass on, they never leave the infinitude and oneness of Love, a biblical name for God. I understood that my friend's passing could not have left an emptiness in the allness of divine Love, where everyone dwells. I felt at peace knowing that both my friend and I are always encompassed by and immersed in Love. There is no separation in God. We are all forever one in Love.

After this revelation, I received an invitation to spend the Fourth of July with some friends in another state, which I gladly accepted. I saw it as a direct result of my newly acquired spiritual understanding that wherever we might be, we are always totally enveloped in and loved by divine Love.

This healing of grief was just the beginning of a much broader expansion of thought. I now understand more that God's ever-present goodness and power remove the false evidence that there is a lack of any kind. The only seeming lack is of our own understanding and acceptance of that goodness and power. When we recognize the allness of infinite Love, our experience cannot include a lack of purpose, employment, resources, or meaningful relationships.

Because Love fills all space, it must fill us too, moment by moment. In fact, as the image and likeness of God, we each reflect Love constantly. A reflection is never apart from what it reflects. This active reflection is constantly happening within the infinitude of Spirit, Mind, two other biblical names for God.

Because Mind is the only power, there is no space anywhere for a power opposed to God, good. Therefore, the universe, including all of God's children, is subject only to divine Mind's harmonious, principled, and incorruptible government. There can't be gaps in harmonious action.

I saw more deeply that the substance of Spirit is entirely spiritual. The oneness of Spirit cannot be touched or trespassed upon by a belief that we are limited, missing, or material. The allness of Spirit precludes the somethingness, or existence, of matter, and therefore of any disease.

Understanding this allness of Spirit brings about spiritual healing that is not abstract. It is tangible and concrete, as I witnessed recently when a friend contacted me asking for treatment through Christian Science prayer. She was overcome with an eye condition. She was about to travel back home after attending a work-related conference and was concerned that she wouldn't be able to board the flight with that condition. She worried about the arrangements to be made for her young family in case she couldn't get home that day.

When she called, I happened to be writing this very article and praying with the ideas in it. This enabled me to affirm to her that "there are no vacuums," and that wherever she might be—home or elsewhere—she was in the infinite, all-encompassing presence of God. I assured her that the infinitude of divine Love doesn't leave any space for something unlike God to be manifested in us, such as disease. Together, we acknowledged that she could not react to any adverse material suggestion; as the reflection of God's harmonious being, the only power there is, she could only experience harmonious action, love, health, and perfection. We also reasoned that her family could not be left without care, but were totally encircled in and sustained by divine Love as well.

After this discussion, the condition subsided significantly, and she was able to board her flight. By the time she got home, she was completely healed.

Mrs. Eddy writes: "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings" (*Science and Health*, p. vii). The sustaining infinite is spiritual, and is solid. We can lean on it; we can forever and under all circumstances rely on it. Its infinitude implies allness, leaving no vacuums, no holes, no one hanging or apart from its sustaining power. It leaves no space for fear or weariness. It fills us with an unwavering trust that infinite Love is constantly meeting every human need.

Struggling to attend church?

By Myriam Betouche

Originally published in French

Do you find that things which once were simple, like regularly attending church services, now seem complicated or difficult? Do you now have to face pressure from family members to sleep in on Sundays, or go away for the weekend? For a midweek testimony meeting, there might be concerns about traffic or public transit congestion, security issues, fatigue, an employer's expectations that you work into the evening, or trouble driving at night. All this may make going to church feel like going to the moon. But the truth is, going to church is what always blesses us and our communities.

In The Church of Christ, Scientist, which Mary Baker Eddy founded, people gather not only on Sundays for a church service but also on Wednesdays for a testimony meeting for the purpose of sharing in public the effect of practicing Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy founded the church out of necessity to forward and safeguard her discovery of Christian Science and the practice of spiritual healing, which she outlined in detail in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.

Like an oasis in the desert, these weekly services and meetings refresh our perspective and provide a place to drink the waters of spiritual inspiration.

Why are these provisions so needed? A focus on materialism and materiality would subtly and silently turn us away from the spiritual inspiration we need to practice Christian healing. Understanding the reason for and potential of these weekly gatherings, we'll want to make sure we attend them to drink of the fresh water of life they offer us on our life journeys.

Christian Science Wednesday testimony meetings are designed as a collective experience where people of all walks of life meet together. They begin with a hymn and inspired readings from the Bible and *Science and*

Health. Shortly after, those attending share experiences of healing.

The beauty of this is that often a testifier will share an experience he or she had that will be the very specific help or guidance another member or attendee needs to hear that night. Afterward, those present will often share how a specific testimony was just the uplift they needed.

When we face resistance to our desire to attend church, it is important to understand where it is coming from. What would oppose the giving and receiving of healing insights and testimonies that prove the power, the omnipotence, of divine Mind, God, and the nothingness of a material sense and its false beliefs of sin and sickness?

The student of Christian Science learns to protect his mental territory. Right where a materialistic mind-set has decided that, for whatever reason, you'd be better off not going to a Sunday service or a Wednesday evening testimony meeting, the alert metaphysician decides for himself what is truly beneficial and what is not.

One Wednesday evening I faced such resistance. My commute to church was over an hour, which meant I had to leave early from a very demanding job. And I was pursuing a higher education degree. I felt burdened by all the tasks I was facing, including five urgent ones I needed to perform for the next day. Four were work-related, and one was for a church activity.

I concluded that I had better not go to church, because even if I spent the entire night working on all this, it wouldn't be enough to complete those tasks. I felt so sad to be deprived of the Wednesday church meeting, which was truly an oasis for me.

But suddenly, I thought, "I'm going anyway!" At least I would not miss out on church.

When I arrived there, a fellow member, upon hearing of my situation, gladly offered to take on my urgent church task. But the most amazing thing happened when the usher opened the door to the auditorium for me. As I entered near the start of the service, I heard

the First Reader reading this from the Bible: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

Those words went directly to my heart. Instantly, I knew why I needed to attend the testimony meeting that very evening—to have that sense of burden lifted off me.

In the car on my way home, several ideas came to me showing how I could address my four remaining tasks differently. All were resolved within three days, with some deadlines adjusted.

Daring to come to church is very much like defending our mental territory. We are virtually declaring to matter-based thinking, “Thus far and no farther.”

There is another dynamic going on at a Christian Science church service. On the Day of Pentecost, when Jesus’ followers came together “with one accord in one place,” they received the Holy Ghost, a new understanding of what Jesus had taught (see Acts 2:1–4). As Mrs. Eddy writes, “The advent of this understanding is what is meant by the descent of the Holy Ghost, —that influx of divine Science which so illuminated the Pentecostal Day and is now repeating its ancient history” (*Science and Health*, p. 43).

The presence and the collective prayers of the congregation at a Sunday service or Wednesday testimony meeting play a unique and important part in attendees feeling such an influx of inspiration. Being of “one accord in one place,” you feel each other’s support and quiet, deep listening. It’s like an orchestra which experiences something unique on a specific night—something which none of the musicians would feel if they were playing at home by themselves.

Alertness is needed to detect and overcome whatever inertia would keep us from attending church. Once we have identified where the resistance or reluctance to participate is coming from, refuted it as powerless, and accepted the gift of God that attending church is, apathy is broken and can be more easily expelled.

In church we learn that we can experience a greater sense of freedom in our lives and discover more of our divine rights as beloved children of God. That’s a blessing worth fighting for.

SPIRITUAL SHORT

Responding to the tidal pull

By Phra Blakely

I live at the beach and swim most days in the Pacific Ocean. Some days I float and let the tide take me to my destination. However, if I am not careful about the direction of the tidal pull, it can take me away from where I want to go. Then I must swim vigorously to correct my direction.

I’ve found it helpful to observe how other swimmers, boaters, or paddleboarders are responding to the tidal pull prior to my swim, so I can make the right decisions about my swim that day.

This activity reminds me of the popular pull toward highly publicized diseases and discord, which can take one mentally in an unintended direction and require immediate corrective action. Like observing the others on the water, we can check how the tide of thought might pull us and then be better prepared to move in the right direction.

My early morning study of the weekly Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*, composed of passages from the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, prepares me to mentally swim in the right direction. Starting my day with thoughts of God elevates my thinking above materialistic rubbish. And because this thinking is reflecting the goodness of God, it is spiritual and unlimited, and therefore it can help me in spreading good and spiritual inspiration to others.

We can decide each day whether we will float with or swim against the tide of material thinking. Before venturing out, we can take a stand for Spirit, God. *Science and Health* says: “Entirely separate from the belief and dream of material living, is the Life divine, revealing spiritual understanding and the consciousness of man’s dominion over the whole earth. This understanding casts out error and heals the sick, and with it you can speak ‘as one having authority’” (p. 14).

Understanding our spiritual nature gives us the authority to defeat wrong-direction drifting. Right-direction swimming brings healing to ourselves and others, and it can help to change the tide of thought.

Phra Blakely

INTERLUDE

As strong this day

By Bobby Lewis

“I am as strong this day”¹
as I once was.

To do what, Caleb?
Run a fast mile
do 100 push-ups
heft a sword and shield
throw a javelin
a really, really long way?

What was your strength
those millennia ago
when you and the other scouts
were peering into the
Promised Land?

Many thought it impossible for
your people to make it there—
too many obstacles
too much opposition.

Yet through your
spiritual vision
your trust
in the divine One
you saw
what was promised
as possible
as fulfillable
in fact—fulfilled—
and so it was.
Yes, yes, yes
that true strength
that willingness
to respond to
the Almighty God
to trust
to live with
spiritual vision
undiminished
by passage of years
is undiminished
still.

Like you
we too are as strong this day
as we once were
to respond to Spirit’s call
to see the Promised Land
the kingdom of God
fully present
fully accessible
right here
right now.

¹Joshua 14:11.

Growth in grace eliminates abnormal growth

By Elizabeth H. Roth

Several years ago, I became aware of a growth on my forehead. I recalled that my mother had had a similar growth in the same place. Hers was medically diagnosed as a form of skin cancer and was eventually surgically removed. So part of my prayer was challenging the belief in genetically inherited predispositions.

I found this passage from the Christian Science textbook especially helpful: “Heredity is a prolific subject for mortal belief to pin theories upon; but if we learn that nothing is real but the right, we shall have no dangerous inheritances, and fleshly ills will disappear” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 228).

Because my preferred hairstyle includes bangs covering my forehead, the growth was usually hidden from view. However, I was reminded of it each time I lathered my face while showering. Whenever I became aware of it, I exchanged this false sense of material growth for the true sense of growth in grace.

Science and Health advises, “What we most need is the prayer of fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds” (p. 4). I resolved to put this guidance into practice in my daily life. In proportion as I did so, I increasingly began to recognize discordant situations as opportunities to express more patience, meekness, and loving-kindness—often with harmonious results.

One morning over a year ago, I noticed that the growth was beginning to disintegrate. The next time I washed my face, all remnants of the growth were rinsed away, leaving behind no evidence of abnormality.

I gratefully shared this development with the Christian Science practitioner who had been praying with me

to spiritualize my concept of growth. This healing has encouraged me to lift my thinking from a material to a spiritual basis more consistently, day by day.

Elizabeth H. Roth

Alexandria, Virginia, US

God, the great deliverer

By Cathryn Maycock Rathsam

In the Bible God repeatedly tells us that He will deliver us (see Isaiah 46:4, for example). The Scriptures are reminding us that God is the creator and the great deliverer.

What a joy it was to prepare spiritually for the births of my children, praying with the help of a Christian Science practitioner when expecting the arrival of a baby. A favorite passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, next to the marginal heading “Scientific obstetrics,” says: “Though gathering new energy, this idea cannot injure its useful surroundings in the travail of spiritual birth. A spiritual idea has not a single element of error, and this truth removes properly whatever is offensive. The new idea, conceived and born of Truth and Love, is clad in white garments. Its beginning will be meek, its growth sturdy, and its maturity undecaying” (p. 463).

Pondering this daily brought me great freedom from the human discomforts so commonly associated with pregnancy. I regularly prayed to know that the child to come was already a complete, perfect, spiritual idea of our Father-Mother God—God’s own delightful image and likeness. I was learning that all the healthy and beautiful qualities of God are included within and natural to each one of us.

It was a joy to list some of these qualities, which are the true substance of all children: lovingkindness, purity, gentleness, intelligence, beauty, right activity,

joy, calmness, strength, health, honesty, obedience, and many more.

Before I went to the hospital for the first delivery, the practitioner said, “A host of angels have prepared the way.” And, yes! Angel messages were with me continuously. The whole experience was a joy—joy to know that the birth was going forward, and joy to know that God is the great Physician.

The doctor was very respectful of our desire to have a natural birth, and so it was. When strength was needed, I knew that God was my strength. My husband was able to join my mother and me during the last thirty minutes in the labor room, and he sang hymns to me. The birth was natural and harmonious. One of the nurses commented that it was the most beautiful birth she had ever witnessed.

The second birth was with a medical practitioner who specialized in home deliveries. Our Christian Science practitioner told the Christian Science nurse, also present at our home, that there was no need for this to take a long time. In God’s kingdom we experience perfect order and perfect timing. Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

About this time the doctor told my husband that the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby’s neck and that this situation could be serious. My husband began to pray, including with the truths that the baby was a complete, perfect, spiritual idea of God and that there were no obstructions in God’s kingdom. He prayed with the statement that “a spiritual idea has not a single element of error.” Also, the Christian Science nurse called the practitioner to alert her to the specific need. Things began to progress, and our darling son was born safely. The doctor was astounded and so very happy.

There remained one more challenge. The baby’s head had a large lump on one side. Since it didn’t disappear after a few days, we called another Christian Science practitioner to pray for the baby. She said, “Why, I never heard of such a thing! That’s ridiculous! There simply is no such thing!” She was so joyous, and her response broke the fear that we were under. Within

a day the lump had disappeared and the baby’s head became properly shaped. Praise the Lord!

The birth of our third child was a couple of weeks overdue, which caused the midwife some anxiety. She said a sonogram would need to be taken. I read an article from the Spanish *Herald of Christian Science* which felt as if it had been written just for me—it stated that right timing belongs to Mind, God. Divine Love always leads us at the right pace.

I went into labor the day the sonogram had been scheduled for. The birth itself went very well, but after the birth the bleeding wouldn’t stop. The midwife and assistant were very concerned. A Christian Science practitioner was called, who began praying for me immediately. She knew that none of God’s ideas can ever be separated from Him—from good.

I was also praying. I knew that my life is sustained not through blood but through God and God alone, and that there can be no ill effect from something beautiful, an idea of God. I focused on these lines from a hymn:

I know no life divided,
O Lord of life, from Thee;
In Thee is life provided
For all mankind and me.

(Carl J. P. Spitta, tr. by Richard Massie, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 135, adapt. © CSBD)

The bleeding stopped and all was well. A dear friend called shortly after the birth. She told her friends it was a miracle. But since God is the true deliverer, harmony is natural and to be expected. My heart overflows with gratitude for God’s, Love’s, healing power.

Cathryn Maycock Rathsam
San Diego, California, US

Standing with the truth

By Richard Winegar

I used to wonder what I would feel comfortable doing if something catastrophic happened—where would I turn for help and resolution? I was not raised as a Christian Scientist, and I had been well acquainted with other modalities for treatment at times of crisis. Many years ago, I got an answer to my question.

My wife and I were moving to our new home in Hawaii. We were at our daughter's house and got up at 5:00 a.m. to prepare to go to the airport. I was trying to do some last-minute packing, when the zipper broke on my suitcase. As I was fussing with that, I felt as if an elephant had stepped on my chest, and I went to my knees.

At that moment I affirmed that God was right there with me and nothing bad could touch me because I am the child of God. I stood up and declared my spiritual identity, my unity with God, right then and there. My wife and our daughter came into the room and asked what all the noise was about. I told them that I did not think that I would be able to make it to the airport and that we should reschedule. Then I lay down in bed and all of us started praying. We started saying out loud “the scientific statement of being,” found in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy (p. 468). I continued to declare my spiritual substance and my oneness with God as I'd been taught in Christian Science.

We rescheduled our flight and I called a Christian Science practitioner. This is someone who helps you through prayer to understand spiritual truth and the presence of Christ, the true idea of God. The practitioner and I discussed the idea that I am spiritual and a reflection of God, and I started to pray with that idea. I stayed with this prayer all that day through the night and the next day.

The day after that, I was able to get out of bed at 5:00 a.m. The symptoms were gone, and my wife and I went to the airport. We were on our way to our great adventure in Kauai. I have never looked back and haven't felt

that elephant on my chest again. I am so grateful for Christian Science.

Richard Winegar

Laguna Beach, California, us

No more impetigo

By Elizabeth Jones

It all started when my four-year-old daughter developed what is commonly known as impetigo, a skin disease that is medically seen as contagious. When the symptoms appeared, I knew that I could not have her attend kindergarten in this condition, so I kept her home. As I cared for her to make her feel comfortable, I also prayed for her.

Following what I had been learning from the teachings of Christian Science, I prayed to know what was spiritually true about my daughter. I thought deeply about truths that could be found in the Bible, such as that my daughter was good and perfect, made in God's image and likeness. The teachings of Christ Jesus bring out that God, Spirit, is our Father. And Christian Science explains that, as children of our Father-Mother God, we must be spiritual.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures includes this statement: “A spiritual idea has not a single element of error, and this truth removes properly whatever is offensive” (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 463). I found it so helpful to know that an ailment or error of any kind could not be a part of God's creation—including my beloved daughter.

As I prayed, I longed to share with her ideas that she would love and understand. My prayers were answered when these comforting words came to me in the form of a poem:

Precious children

We laugh at you, error,
the things you can't do.
You're just an illusion,
and therefore not true.
You try to defeat us,
without success.
For Truth's ever present,
and ready to bless.
So whatever the problem,
wherever we roam,
As God's precious children,
we're never alone.

When I read it to her, the change was almost immediate. Not only did this poem uplift me, it brought encouragement to my daughter. From that moment on, the healing of the skin condition became visibly evident. I would hear my daughter playing happily in her room and singing at the top of her voice her own special song from her Father-Mother God. What a wonderful gift! Within a couple of days all was well. Her skin was perfectly beautiful and clear and she was back to her happy, active self.

As a result of this healing, she and her brother were enrolled in a Christian Science Sunday School. To this day, my daughter still remembers this poem. I thank You, God, for Your guidance in prayer. I am deeply grateful for the many blessings I have experienced then and now through the study of Christian Science.

Elizabeth Jones

Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Exempt from suffering

By *Jeremy Bradshaw*

We read in the Bible that Jesus healed “all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23). The world accepts the suggestion that men and women are complicated

material assemblies subject to random intrusions of hostile elements and internal malfunctions that can cause pain and suffering. But by revealing the spiritual truth of man that Jesus taught and demonstrated, Christian Science shows how to claim our exemption from such injustice.

In the textbook of Christian Science, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy explains: “Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick” (pp. 476–477).

Let me share how I claimed my exemption from suffering one night a few years ago.

I was wakened by a pain in my groin that slowly developed from uncomfortable to severe. I visited the bathroom but experienced no relief. The pain was such that I found it difficult to think straight. All I could do was reach out to our loving Father-Mother God. I said, “Dear Father, please tell me what I need to know, right now.” And the words of a wonderful hymn from the *Christian Science Hymnal* came to me. I recited them slowly to myself, cherishing every line and claiming the truths therein as my own. The first verse reads:

We thank Thee and we bless Thee,
O Father of us all,
That e'en before we ask Thee
Thou hear'st Thy children's call.
We praise Thee for Thy goodness
And tender, constant care,
We thank Thee, Father-Mother,
That Thou hast heard our prayer.
(John Randall Dunn, No. 374, © CSBD)

Well, I was certainly calling. I thought about that “tender, constant care.” I told myself that my prayer was already answered and that I would hear what the answer was. I paused to embrace the idea of being an innocent, trusting child, always cared for, before moving on to the second verse:

We thank Thee and we bless Thee,

O Lord of all above,
That now Thy children know Thee
As everlasting Love.
And Love is not the author
Of discord, pain and fear;
O Love divine, we thank Thee
That good alone is here.

Here was the answer: God, divine Love, does not create discord, pain, or fear. God made all that really exists, and, as the first chapter of Genesis declares, “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (verse 31). This pain had no place, or existence, in God’s perfect creation, and was no part of my true, spiritual identity as His beloved child. I pondered the momentous fact that good alone was there. Then on I went to the last verse:

We thank Thee, Father-Mother,
For blessings, light and grace
Which bid mankind to waken
And see Thee face to face.
We thank Thee, when in anguish
We turn from sense to Soul,
That we may hear Thee calling:
Rejoice, for thou art whole.

I did indeed feel that I was in anguish! But how grateful I was that I knew what to do. I could turn from the picture being presented by the physical senses to the facts of Soul—to the truth that my life is governed in complete harmony by divine law. And I had a wonderful way to express that gratitude—rejoice that I was whole and free to be what God made me to be. I held on to that thought, then went back and earnestly repeated the whole hymn.

By the time I got to the end, the pain was dissolving. I returned to bed and lay still and quiet, feeling immersed in God’s warmth and peace. Before long I fell asleep and woke the next morning with no discomfort. There has been no recurrence of the issue.

My experience that night gave me a tangible sense of the presence and power of divine Love in a moment of great human need.

Jeremy Bradshaw
London, England

Freed from pain and restricted movement

By Karen Gould

Crystal clear blue skies, snowcapped mountains, and the jingling sound of bells—all so evocative of the Swiss Alps! This was day one of my vacation, and I was delighted to be joining a friend for a few days of walking.

Although I enjoy getting out into the countryside, I’m not a serious, experienced, or regular hill-walker. That first day we walked more than twice the distance we had planned. My friend is also a Christian Scientist, and as we walked, we shared with one another our inspiration from reading the Bible Lesson in the *Christian Science Quarterly* that morning. We also shared other ideas resulting from our prayers and study of the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.

Later that evening, however, my legs were painful. Initially, I didn’t pay too much attention to it but simply accepted the pain as a result of having overdone it. The following day, though, I was unable to complete the walk. That night, the intense pain kept me awake, and I struggled to move. I was keen not to disappoint my friend by needing to back out of the walk the following day, but at that point it didn’t seem possible that I would be able to go anywhere.

I knew I wanted to deal with this difficulty through prayer, as I had experienced other physical healings through prayer alone. I texted a Christian Science practitioner and asked her to pray for me. She was glad to, and in her response she reminded me that I did not bear any burden of mortal belief, and that as an immortal idea of God, divine Love, I was free.

I knew that this message came from a deep conviction and understanding that God created man in His own likeness, entirely spiritual, complete, and good, as we learn in Genesis: “God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (1:31).

I spent several hours praying with helpful thoughts from the Bible and *Science and Health*. Through what I had learned in Christian Science, I knew that God had never made us subject to material laws of limitation.

Christ Jesus’ healing ministry was rooted in this understanding of man’s innate freedom. He said, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

And in *Science and Health* we read: “God made man free. Paul said, ‘I was free born.’ All men should be free. ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ Love and Truth make free, but evil and error lead into captivity.

“... The illusion of material sense, not divine law, has bound you, entangled your free limbs, crippled your capacities, enfeebled your body, and defaced the tablet of your being” (p. 227).

As I prayed with these passages, I was completely released from any fear. I could see that what seemed to be a physical problem resulting from over-exertion was nothing more than an “illusion”—a mistaken view of myself as material rather than spiritual. I knew with a conviction that comes from spiritual sense—our innate ability to understand God—that no supposed material law could interfere with or hamper my freedom.

I rejoiced that because God made me a spiritual idea, never in matter and subject to limitation, I was entirely governed by the law of Spirit, God. From my prayerful study that morning, it became clear to me that I didn’t need to pray for a healing of my legs. Healing in Christian Science isn’t about trying to fix up matter through prayer. Rather, healing comes from acknowledging our real spiritual identity as the perfect creation of God, present now and forever intact as His reflection.

The Bible says: “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands” (Isaiah 55:12). And Hymn 64 from the *Christian Science Hymnal* says: “The way leads upward and its goal draws nearer, / Thought soars enraptured, fetterless and free” (Violet Hay, © CSBD).

When it was time to leave for our walk, I was able to go, “fetterless and free.” That day we completed a walk that was challenging and longer than planned. There was no pain or restriction of my movement, nor has there been since. I felt such joy, not only in the majesty and beauty of our surroundings, but in having witnessed the power and effectiveness of divine Truth in bringing about this healing.

Karen Gould

Belper, Derbyshire, England

OF GOOD REPORT

“Admitting only such conclusions...”

By Robert Witney

I’ve recently been considering an idea that provides deep inspiration about how we can heal through the means Christ Jesus did. It’s from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, who said: “Stand porter at the door of thought. Admitting only such conclusions as you wish realized in bodily results, you will control yourself harmoniously” (p. 392).

This says to me that we need to consider any conclusion a thought carries with it—including when a thought makes us feel uncomfortable—before deciding whether to “admit,” to accept, it as true.

Recently, I had a healing experience as a result of following the guidance in this passage. I was visiting

some friends whose young cat was having a difficult time. It spent almost a whole day hiding under their couch and wouldn't come out to eat. My friends were worried about it, and we were all praying.

As I was praying, the thought came, "You don't really care about that cat. You just want to get credit for a healing." It didn't make a lot of sense, since I wasn't the only one praying for the cat, but accompanying the thought was a conviction that I wanted to look impressive and I'd had a history of being that way. Although this was an uncomfortable thought, I decided to go about discovering whether it might be alerting me to an area in which I needed to grow.

At the time, I'd also been thinking about an impactful statement I'd read in *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* by Mrs. Eddy: "The unerring and fixed Principle of all healing is God; and this Principle should be sought from the love of good, from the most spiritual and unselfish motives" (p. 232). It didn't seem like a stretch to love good. In fact, I knew that I loved good.

Because I loved good, I therefore also had to love that cat and want to see it free and well. That wasn't a human ego talking, but unselfishness and goodness. In this instance, my reasoning had led me to a conclusion that I could admit—and wanted to! I felt at peace, and soon heard that the cat had come out of its hiding place and was eating. Afterward, the cat (which had once been feral) even allowed itself to be patted by strangers—something it had always refused before.

I am grateful I took the time to grapple with the aggressive claim of selfishness. I could have quickly dismissed it as a distraction from my prayer for the cat. After all, the claim wasn't about the cat—it was about me! But in handling it, I felt like Jacob in the Old Testament grappling with mortal beliefs that had plagued him, before saying to an angel message: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26). By reversing the untrue, accusatory thought of selfishness, I was able to recognize the true statement of my unselfish nature—and that was a blessing. *Science and Health* says, "... by reversal, errors serve as waymarks to the one Mind, in which all error disappears in celestial Truth" (p. 267).

In this experience, I learned that the suggestion of being selfish wasn't really my own thinking. That doesn't mean I don't take responsibility for my thinking and actions. But because, as the Bible tells us, God, Mind, only includes "thoughts of peace, and not of evil" (Jeremiah 29:11), and we reflect God, the thought of selfish motives had to be an aggressive mental suggestion, not a divine fact, and it lost its power over me once I recognized it as such.

As I've continued to grow in my understanding of Christian Science, it's become easier to reject thoughts—and conclusions—that don't line up with what is spiritually true of myself as a child of God.

The divine Mind, God, is actually communicating with each of us, His sons and daughters, nonstop. Our Father-Mother Love patiently and persistently blesses us with right and healing guidance. Christ, the spiritual idea of divine Love, shows us where we need to change and grow and always leads us higher.

The Epistle of James gives us some direction in discerning when thoughts come from God: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (3:17).

By prayerfully considering thoughts against what we know to be true of God and ourselves as God's creation, and then acting only in accord with what is true, we will consistently come to healing conclusions.

A note of gratitude

By Margarita Cazares

Originally published in Spanish

Several months ago I came across a wonderful article titled "'Refugee is not a profession'" in the Spanish edition of *The Herald of Christian Science* (Anni Ulich,

December 2018). As I read it, tears of gratitude welled up in my eyes.

Recalling the author's faith and perseverance was of great encouragement to me during a recent mountain hike. Her article recounts a time when she was a young girl during World War II, and her mother had an intuition to leave the village they had been evacuated to after the bombing of their city, as the fighting got closer.

During a nightlong journey to a nearby harbor, the author's little sister, just five years old, complained several times that she could no longer walk. Her older brother kept praying the Lord's Prayer. Her mother, too, was no doubt praying every step of the way, and she felt led to tell her five-year-old that she must tell her feet to keep walking.

This example helped me on an excursion one of my children had invited me to accompany him on. His excursion group had planned to climb a mountain in our native Mexico called Telapón, which rises 4,063 meters (13,330 ft) above sea level. I agreed to go.

After hiking for some time, I began to feel fatigued by the high altitude. The thought came to me, "Tell your feet to keep walking." I felt the forcefulness of that command impel me forward. My son is very observant and he pointed out the natural beauty around us, including the many flowers which, in reflecting the sunlight, appeared to have shining petals of gold. And he reminded me that I was the reflection of God, expressing the qualities of God, such as endurance, strength, and freedom. This was the spiritual impetus I needed to keep walking.

As I walked, I prayed silently with "the scientific statement of being," which begins: "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 468). I kept reminding myself that man is spiritual and that matter has no authority or substance, and so I cannot be fatigued. "You are Mind's—God's—manifestation," I would say to myself. "You manifest only perfection and health."

I continued hiking for quite a while, being grateful for and admiring the beautiful landscape. At one point I was worried I might not be able to make the return trip. But I kept walking, leaning on God for strength and guidance. I am grateful to say that I was able to get down the mountain, and the return trip, which we took by another path, was very harmonious. With each step the weariness faded, and all the discomfort and fatigue ultimately vanished.

The true standard of care

By Jennifer Johnson

Why does caring for others matter, and how is it demonstrated?

Caring for others is an integral part of Christianity. It fulfills the law of Love. Just as we can't take Christianity out of Christian Science, we cannot separate loving each other from our Cause. Mary Baker Eddy writes, "Having one God, one Mind, one consciousness,—which includes only His own nature,—and loving your neighbor as yourself, constitute Christian Science, which must demonstrate the nothingness of any other state or stage of being" (*No and Yes*, p. 38).

Having one God, understanding or fully realizing that there is just one Mind, allows us to see that we have no power of ourselves—only the power of God as His expression. As Christ Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

Having one God also means we understand that all of God's children, created in His likeness—spiritual, pure, and perfect—work together under the direction of the one Mind. Knowing this enables us to love our neighbor as ourselves—to see our neighbor as having the same Mind that we have.

This full and true understanding is what makes up the Science of Christianity. With this law of God, good, as the only power, we can share only love for each other. Knowing that we are all ideas of God sets Christian Science apart from the world's systems of thought. We recognize that there is no dividing line between our neighbor and ourselves, and we learn to love fully just as God loves us. This perfect love, which is the heart of Christian Science, enables us to demonstrate the nothingness of sin and sickness and the omnipresence and omnipotence of divine Love.

So how do Christian Scientists care for one another? Here is an analogy that helps me understand how we can bear witness to spiritual Truth for each other. Picture yourself welcomed through a door and taken to a room all your own. A quiet room, where you can think and pray and rest. It feels so calm here, and you know there's an attendant on the other side of the door, so you can gain the peace you're seeking. There's a quiet recognition that the light of Christ is here and gently ever active. The atmosphere is alive with the comforting thought of being in a sanctuary—in a place of alertness, stillness, and freedom from distractions. You feel a clear sense of being attended to, of love and care, and you instantly know this is a mental space you can trust.

That analogy of a safe space does not equate to any particular physical place. Because it is mental, it can be experienced anywhere. The imagery came from someone who asked me late one night to pray for her, as she was struggling with a physical challenge. She later told me that immediately after I had agreed to provide Christian Science treatment for her, she'd had a strong sense of care and compassion, and a comforting feeling that someone was standing outside her (mental) door on watch. She said it had instantly aided her in resting well that night, and she quickly had a full healing.

This woman also said that with that feeling of comfort had come the thought, "This must be what it feels like to be cared for at a Christian Science nursing facility"—a place where those relying on Christian Science for healing can go to receive inspired, practical care for their needs. Although someone may not be literally waiting on the other side of the door at these facilities, the job of the Christian Science nurse is to be constantly

bearing witness to each individual as the true, spiritual man, God's child. This is the standard of care that we are each called to as Christian Scientists.

Christian Scientists' loving care can also be seen extending to all humanity through Christian Science branch churches, societies, and informal groups and their activities, including Christian Science Reading Rooms. And Christian Science practitioners and teachers all over the world spend their time helping people through the Science of Christ.

A strong community of workers laboring to serve, love, and care for others is so important. The high calling to love and heal each other is our highest vocation. Divinely impelled kindness lubricates all the "joints" of the collective body or organization. It is the oil of consecration that lifts our practice to the pinnacle.

Mrs. Eddy writes: "A Christian Scientist occupies the place at this period of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said: 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.' Let us watch, work, and pray that this salt lose not its saltness, and that this light be not hid, but radiate and glow into noontide glory" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 367).

This is a call to be "salty"—to not lose our love for God and one another, but to reflect God's love and bear witness to the true, spiritual identity of man in caring for one another. In truth, as God's children we could never lose our seasoning, our divine nature, nor be stopped from seeing it in others. We can only shine our light for all to see by standing guard for each other, helping one another love, stay awake, and witness God's majesty. This is the true standard of care, and it is an essential aspect of our Christianity.

What I had in the house

By Don Hinkle

These were tough times. The Bible relates the story of a widow whose late husband left her with a debt she could not pay (see II Kings 4:1–7). Her two sons were going to be taken as slaves to pay the debt, so she cried out to the prophet Elisha for help.

Elisha asked what she had in the house. She had only a pot of oil. He told her to borrow many vessels from the neighbors and then pour the oil from her pot into them all—and the oil just kept flowing until every vessel was full. She was able to sell some of the collected oil to pay her debt, and she and her sons lived on the remainder.

When my wife and I were faced with a large unforeseen and ongoing bill, I phoned a nearby Christian Science practitioner for prayerful help. I was an unpaid writer at the time and we were living off my wife’s salary. We were members of a small Protestant church, where I was a tenor in the choir and sometimes a substitute pastor, but we had attended a nearby Church of Christ, Scientist, when we could.

Referring to Elisha’s question, the practitioner asked, “What have you got in the house?” This story was unfamiliar to me at that time, so I said we had some inherited furniture we could sell. He explained what he meant and asked me to think about it more.

I hung up the phone and sat down at the typewriter, where I was writing an ambitious novel. Finishing and selling it would take a year or more, but then I realized, “I can type pretty fast.” I called the practitioner back to tell him of the inspiration to utilize this skill, and he encouraged me to get to work.

I quickly found firms that hired out typists. When I went in for a typing test, within an hour they placed me at a small service bureau. The modest salary from my work there gradually grew until I was earning more money than I had at my last paying job.

That was the official start of my spiritual education. There was a world more to learn, but I was beginning to see that “step by step will those who trust Him find

that ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,’” as Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 444).

Since this experience, I have finished my novel and have written several more. Over the years, I have gradually but certainly learned that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (I Corinthians 3:19). Many more stories in the Bible tell us how to replace this foolishness with God’s wisdom. That’s an interesting assignment, and it certainly gives us enough employment to fill our days as we increasingly come into the understanding of our immortal life!

A new home— a double blessing

By Don Krieger

What a joy to know that God is available every moment, providing answers to all our needs.

Several years ago, my parents were notified that our home would have to be demolished in three years to make way for a new freeway. Within a few weeks after this news, my father found another home and made an offer to purchase it, which was accepted. The funds from our current home’s sale would be needed to purchase the new home.

To human sense, finding a buyer for a home that was going to be torn down in three years would seem difficult, even at a drastically reduced price. My parents asked a Christian Science practitioner to pray for us, knowing that spiritual sense brings to consciousness the light of divine Principle, which harmoniously governs every situation.

The practitioner encouraged us to pray with this statement from the Bible: “I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their

want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality” (II Corinthians 8:13, 14). Thus, whatever blesses us must be a blessing for others, too.

Our home was put up for sale, and the first Sunday afternoon after that an open house was held. My father and I spent the afternoon at the beach. When we returned, my mother said that the house had been sold. The buyer was moving to the area on a temporary basis, and said that a three-year time frame was perfect for them.

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, writes, “Never ask for to-morrow: it is enough that divine Love is an ever-present help; and if you wait, never doubting, you will have all you need every moment” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 307). I am extremely grateful that we can always turn to God to supply every need.

My thoughts or God’s thoughts?

By *Eleanor Duram*

It matters what we think. Every day, we entertain thousands of thoughts. And while it can seem like those thoughts simply come and go and there’s not much we can do about them, in fact, we have the power at every moment to determine which thoughts we accept and which we reject. But on what basis?

Any thought that is truly good comes from God, because God is good itself. We know thoughts are from God when they are loving and bring blessings, since Love is a biblical name for God. God’s thoughts are honest, since Truth is also a name for God in the Bible. We feel a sense of peace as we act from the basis of these thoughts. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasizes the importance of right thinking. He warns against anger,

lust, judging others (see Matthew 5:22, 27, 28; 7:1). These would not be thoughts from God, good.

Jesus continuously listened to God, and so can we. He spoke of his oneness with God: “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). We can feel that oneness as well, expressing God in the many ways that Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, writes about Him in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. In answer to the question, “What is God?” she writes, “God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love” (p. 465). As ideas of Mind, we are intelligent, receptive, limitless, accurate. Expressing Truth, we are just, truthful, sincere. As the reflection of Love, we are gentle, gracious, kind, humble.

I had the opportunity to put some of these qualities into practice while drafting this article. The thought came to me that writing was not my forte, and I should give up. Then I realized that thought could not be from God. Since my motive was to share good thoughts with others, to express unselfishness and spiritual love, God would supply the concepts and perceptions I needed. My job was to express patience and humility and not hurry to quickly finish the article using mere human effort.

I thought about when God instructed Moses to lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Moses responded that he was not eloquent. The Lord answered, “Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say” (Exodus 4:12). Moses was able to speak to the children of Israel and to safely lead them to freedom. Inspired by Moses, I decided to proceed, listening and writing whatever thoughts from God came to me to write. And the thoughts did come.

We can hear these thoughts from God anytime, early in the morning, throughout the day, late at night. What do we think about when we first wake up? Do we identify ourselves as a child of God? Do we think about the day as the unfolding of good? That’s part of how Mrs. Eddy describes *day* in *Science and Health*: “The objects of time and sense disappear in the illumination of spiritual understanding, and Mind measures time according to

the good that is unfolded. This unfolding is God's day, and 'there shall be no night there'" (p. 584).

What thoughts do we have before falling asleep? Sometimes we lie awake worried whether we are making a right decision. The Bible has many passages that can show how to listen to God when making a decision. For instance, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21).

This isn't positive thinking. This is a higher, spiritual state of consciousness in which we see something of what is really going on in God's universe. Thoughts coming from Truth and Love are always good and bless all mankind. We each have the ability to listen to, and act on, these thoughts.

The rattlesnake and the ninety-first Psalm

By Robin Williams

It's my daily practice to pray with the ninety-first Psalm from the Bible, as I was once told that it's referred to as the "Soldier's Psalm" because it is so filled with the thought of protection.

One morning, I felt particularly guided to pay close attention to this line in the psalm: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder" (verse 13). One modern-language Bible interprets this line as: "You'll walk unharmed among lions and snakes" (Eugene Peterson, *The Message*). Then I went on with my day.

Later, I decided to go for a run with my dog. She was always exuberant when we went on these runs and was often way out in front of me. We were on our way back, when I noticed what I thought was a stick on the trail. As I recall, we had already crossed it on our way out. But I paid more attention to it on the return trip. I was

running over the top of it when I looked more closely and realized it wasn't a stick but a rattlesnake. My dog had already passed over it twice.

I decided to go back to see if the snake was dead or just stretched out on the trail. It hadn't moved or exhibited any threatening behavior toward us. When I returned to the location, it was casually slithering into the grass.

Obviously, the angel message I had received that morning was just what I needed, and my experience showed how important prayer is. It had embraced all three of us—myself, my dog, and the snake—in the loving arms of God.

It's so important to listen to that "still, small voice" when it speaks to us. It's always a reminder of the dear Father-Mother God's caring for all of creation.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Rotation on the Board of Trustees

By Board of Trustees

We would like to announce a change on the Board of Trustees of The Christian Science Publishing Society. On August 2, 2024, David Hohle, CSB, rotated off the Board of Trustees. The new Trustee, Jennifer McLaughlin, CSB, joins Michael Fish, CSB, and Arcadia Nones, CSB, on the Board of Trustees effective October 1, 2024.

Jennifer is a Christian Science practitioner and teacher in Boston, where she has served since 2010 as the Publisher's Agent for Mary Baker Eddy's Writings at The Mother Church. In this role, she has overseen the publication and distribution of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings in all formats and languages on behalf of the Christian Science Board of Directors, the Publisher. Jen has always appreciated the sacredness of

this work and has performed her duties with spiritual dignity and grace.

Prior to being appointed Publisher's Agent, Jen served in several other publishing and marketing-related jobs at the Publishing Society. She has a degree in Environmental Science and earned an MBA from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, while her husband, Abe, was stationed in that city as a reporter for *The Christian Science Monitor*. She's been a *Journal*-listed Christian Science practitioner since 2010 and became a teacher of Christian Science in 2021.

We are grateful for all Dave has brought to his role as Trustee over the last four and a half years. A Christian Science practitioner and teacher from Chicago, he has expressed joy in all his work for the Church and a ready willingness to serve. We know he will continue to bless the Cause of Christian Science through his healing and teaching ministry.

Please join us in thanking Dave and in welcoming Jen.

Board of Trustees

The Christian Science Publishing Society

EDITORIAL

Rejoicing—before and beyond elections

By Tony Lobl

A phrase in the Bible's book of Psalms captures how we often seem to view political opponents today: "the man [or woman] who bringeth wicked devices to pass" (Psalms 37:7). Yikes!

Even if opposing candidates were to pose the existential threat we might think they do, the psalmist's counsel that leads into the words quoted above stands: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself

because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

To "fret not" is to not let worry reign in us. So much seems at stake in elections that dreading what we believe would be the wrong result feels like a rational response. But fear saps our sense of empowerment, while looking beyond the daily political ups and downs enables us to perceive the one power already and always at work that's forever established, impartially beneficent, and incorruptible. Above all, it's power that does not harm but loves and heals: the power of Christ, the true idea of God so evident in Jesus, "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

The oppressive "devil" that Jesus freed people from wasn't an evil person or group of people; those he healed were liberated from the influence of what the Bible calls the carnal mind. This carnal or mortal mind is the misperception that life and power exist independent of the infinite, divine Mind, God—the true source of every individual identity. Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered the divine Science that underlies Jesus' healings, describes what he proved in this way: "There is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has all-power, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 228).

We can follow in the footsteps of Jesus and honor God by opening our hearts to this timeless Science of God's all-power. Every *glimpse* of the omnipotence of God, good, challenges mortal mind's narrative that oppression is inevitable. And every individual healing is evidence of mortal mind's powerlessness in light of the all-power of the divine Mind. In turn, these proofs of healing point to the truth that broader claims that the carnal mind can be in the driving seat of a community or nation are divinely unsupported. Since "Mind's control over the universe, including man, is no longer an open question, but is demonstrable Science" (*Science and Health*, p. 171), there is no pathway to power for the carnal mind.

When experiencing healing, we naturally exude a joy described in *Science and Health*: "Let us rejoice that we

are subject to the divine ‘powers that be.’ Such is the true Science of being” (p. 249). This joy simply depends on God being all-power, as He dependably is, and this spiritual cause for rejoicing will be just as valid in the future, whatever the future holds.

But how do we more tangibly feel this cause for joy? The answer appears a few paragraphs earlier in *Science and Health*, in a discussion on our individual need to “form perfect models in thought and look at them continually” in order to “carve them out in grand and noble lives” (p. 248). As we do, we rejoice not only because it is divine power we are subject to, but because of the inevitably wider impact of that fact. The outcome of making steady gains in forming those perfect thought-models and increasingly living a grand and noble life is healing for ourselves and the ability to help others find healing too.

The same discussion in *Science and Health* maps out how we do that: “Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love—the kingdom of heaven—reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear” (p. 248).

Investing time and energy in prioritizing these steps of individual spiritual growth isn’t a neutral stance in the cauldron of an election season. It is an influence for good that reaches out to touch the lives of others. We become clearer transparencies for Life, Truth, and Love, God. We more consistently express divine Life in qualities such as unconditional civility and compassion; honor divine Truth by refusing to believe or circulate lies, or give credence to the notion that they will have an impact; and love our enemies by realizing the spiritual truth that there’s no such thing as an enemy, which brings transformation of oneself and others.

Rejoicing in the divine “powers that be” also helps us discern when we’re getting pulled into making a god of the human powers that be (or claim to be!) by seeing anyone as either a personal savior to adulate or a personal devil to fear and loathe. Our need is to turn from a personal sense of others and ourselves to Truth—whatever the latest news on unfolding events—and yield to the influence of the Christ, bringing to light the

very authority of God, which Jesus demonstrated has the most profound and far-reaching healing impact.

The recognition of God’s power also frees us from being overly fascinated with or anxious about elections. This isn’t a freedom to ignore the issues at stake—or to opt out of participating in the privilege and right to vote where one is entitled to. Rather, it uplifts us to feel the influence of the divine Principle, God, at work, asserting its supremacy, even in the human arena of vote-seekers and those casting ballots. We can steadfastly sustain this higher, healing view all the way through election season, including on election night. Instead of being excitedly or nervously glued to results rolling in, we can affirm the continuity of God’s control in prayer that reaches for, recognizes, and yes, *rejoices* in the all-blessing reality of the permanent and perpetual divine “powers that be.”

Clearly, results are critical to each nation holding an election, and to neighboring nations near and far. But on the day after the election, the psalmist’s counsel still applies, regardless of who holds the reins of elective human government: We can “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.” We can rest in the recognition that divine Love, God, truly reigns over all, and that this power of Love is ever present to demonstrate in the healing of our communities and nations.

Tony Lobl
Associate Editor

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