



# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

What I say unto you I say unto all, watch. — Jesus

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# The ever-breaking news of salvation

Tony Lobl

**When contrasted with** taking in the drama reported in the news from day to day, reading the Bible Lessons laid out in the *Christian Science Quarterly* might seem like a rather sedate exercise. But each week's compilation of citations from the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* conveys the transformative power of Christ, Truth, in fresh ways. That is the acme of up-to-date information: God voicing to human consciousness the knowledge we need of divine goodness, awakening us to what it is timely to understand about God, Spirit, and His spiritual creation. What could be more compelling than the present possibility of Christian healing? This is news we should want to read!

For those of us tethered to breaking news alerts, this daily spiritual news can prompt us to question what we are prioritizing. Is our primary attention given to what seems to be going wrong or to what's eternally right—namely God's all-embracing love, ever presence, and all-powerful truth?

Making the latter our main source of news enables us to shine some healing light on the very events that might otherwise stir us to visceral reactions such as frustration, dread, despair, or even rage. It enables us to look beneath the clamor of events to see a "current running heavenward" (*Science and Health*, p. 105)—an underlying tendency of thought toward the harmony that God forever exudes and that we, as God's expression, truly include. Noting the presence of this heavenly harmony where human discord seems to prevail nurtures a comforting calm as well as confidence in present and future progress. That's a powerful, healing hope to introduce into the mix of humanity's collective thought each day.

The heavenward-running current is ever ongoing because it is the outflow of Christ, divine Truth, causing materialistic thinking to give way to the recognition of what's spiritually real. Christ is ever active in human consciousness, steering us individually and universally in the path of salvation, our ultimate freedom from all discordant consciousness and conditions. Every time we are receptive to that Christly steer, the spiritual truth of how harmonious we are as God's creation is brought to light.

This reality of spiritual harmony is described in various ways throughout Mrs. Eddy's writings, including this bold statement that would certainly strike humanity as "breaking news" today: "Man as God's idea is already saved with an everlasting salvation" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 261). That is, we are not suffering—or even just "getting by"—in an imperfect, material world but are forever well, free, and supplied with infinite resources in a universe operating in perfect harmony.

While this might feel counterintuitive, it is well worth pondering as the spiritual counterfact to all that the material senses report. It means that we're not waiting to be saved but are awakening to the established truth that we are God's expression, 100 percent safe, healthy, and permanently provided for by God, infinite good. Every reversal through Christ of what appears to be the opposite evidence of evil is part of the "current" moving humanity toward universal proof of "everlasting salvation."

A Bible account (see Luke 24) describes a significant shift in this direction when Jesus' crucifixion was itself the day's headline, leaving his followers dispersed and despondent. Two of them, heading out of Jerusalem to a nearby village called Emmaus, couldn't help themselves: All they could talk about was the breaking news, including astonishing rumors that Jesus was still alive. This focus of their conversation continued when they were joined by a stranger, who was actually the risen Jesus, whom they didn't recognize.

Just think about it. Right there, where the headlining news was so utterly attention-grabbing and gut-wrenching, history's most pivotal point—the

cornerstone of humanity’s salvation—was unfolding before their eyes. They were on the road to Emmaus, while Jesus was on the pathway to ascension, his ultimate proof that humanity is only mistakenly bound in, to, or by a limited, mortal existence. In the language of the Scriptures, he was about to ascend “up on high” and “[lead] captivity captive” (Ephesians 4:8). He was not only pointing out the path to salvation but proving that its conclusion is life lived fully above and independent of matter, in pure Spirit, God.

When the two disciples grasped what was really going on, they headed straight back to Jerusalem to share the new, *true* breaking news, the *actual* news—the ever-relevant *good* news that Jesus had risen. He had conclusively proved mortality to be an inaccurate conclusion of the misguided human mind.

This is the news we need to look at to be rightly informed about what’s going on. We bless ourselves and better serve humanity as we daily prioritize familiarity with the gospel news of our everlasting salvation as God’s creation. Letting ourselves be saved by this Christ message dissolves the misperception of existence as a series of acute and chronic problems. By turning to God to dissolve the fear, sorrow, or anger with which we might be tempted to react to whatever’s happening in the world, we will see more of God’s heavenly harmony emerge, both right where we are and beyond our own lives, including in the daily news that gets reported.

**Tony Lobl**, Associate Editor

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## ARTICLES

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### “The inward voice”

*God speaks with infinite power and authority and is heard above fear and doubt.*

*James Walter*

**There is an** inward voice that guides, encourages, comforts, instructs, enlightens, and strengthens us—

and we are all able to hear it. It’s with us all the time. It’s there as we plan our day. It’s there when decisions are made. It’s there in idle moments or busiest times. Many would contend that this voice is our own—what we call our conscience or intuition. But where does this voice actually originate and how do we know to follow it? Does it proceed from a material brain or a personal mind—either of which would be limited in capability and perception—or does it come from a higher, unerring source? These are critical questions for each of us, because the answers shape our perception of ourselves and others and influence our every decision and action.

It says in the Bible, “The Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). This would indicate that all right thinking emanates from Spirit, God—from the all-knowing God, the one infinite Mind—rather than a human mind. Christian Science teaches that as God’s expression, or idea, we are each the recipient of His wisdom; in truth, we can have no other thoughts but His, and we recognize them as coming from God because they are good, and only good. A realization of the spiritual source of all real thought and understanding enables us to recognize the inward voice as the voice of God and acknowledge the source of the messages that guide us as Truth and Love.

**The Bible is full of examples of men and women who were led to safety by heeding God’s voice.**

The Bible is full of examples of men and women who were led to safety and out of the slavery of sin, sickness, and even death by heeding God’s voice. The Old Testament prophets Moses, Jacob, and Elijah all heard it. When Moses doubted his ability to fulfill God’s mission for him, God prepared his thought for the work through a conclusive demonstration of the supremacy of divine Mind (see Exodus 4:1–8).

Mary Baker Eddy writes of this experience in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, “God had lessened Moses’ fear by this proof in divine Science, and the inward voice became to him the voice of God, which said: ‘It shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they

will believe the voice of the latter sign'” (p. 321). Moses' acceptance of the true nature of the inward voice drew him closer to God and enabled him to faithfully follow God's leadings.

The highest example of one who heard and obeyed the divine voice is Christ Jesus. As the Son of God, he was inseparable from Christ, “the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness” (*Science and Health*, p. 332). Jesus' constant communion with his divine Father enabled him to demonstrate his control over matter and heal the sick.

Today, as in every age, we can see evidence of the activity of Christ in human experience, protecting us from harm, releasing us from limitations and disease, resolving contentious issues, and introducing fresh ways of thinking and acting. Those willing to listen for God's voice hear the divine message and experience these blessings.

I had an experience many years ago that illustrated to me the innate ability we all have to hear God and the practical effects of following His guidance. This occurred when I was a teen at home from college for summer break. A heavy rain had rolled in on a hot and muggy day. I put on a swimsuit and went out into that cooling rain. It was delightfully refreshing. But after a few minutes, something told me I should go inside immediately. It was not a subtle suggestion but an unequivocal demand. I got the message and hightailed it to the house. As I opened the door to the porch, a bolt of lightning struck the tree I had been standing next to, stripping the bark of the trunk down to the ground. But I was safe. To me, this was a definite indication that God is always with us, always speaking to us.

**Those willing to listen for God's voice hear the divine message.**

Though other voices can seem to drown out the voice of Truth with its divine inspiration, God speaks with infinite power and authority and is heard above fear and doubt. Christ patiently and persistently awakens thought to God's ever-presence. The necessity of yielding to this divine urging makes listening, hearing,

and following the inward voice of Truth essential to our progress.

As we do this, we will find more and more evidence of the power of Spirit in our daily lives. Mrs. Eddy drives this point home when she says, “To live so as to keep human consciousness in constant relation with the divine, the spiritual, and the eternal, is to individualize infinite power; and this is Christian Science” (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 160).

Keeping “human consciousness in constant relation with the divine” is an attainable goal, for God supplies the inspiration and ability to achieve it. This should be our primary effort in life, for it includes transformative rewards—elevating thought above the limitations of physical sense and providing a sure basis for health and progress.

As we daily seek to hear the voice of God, it is encouraging to remember these words of the Apostle Paul: “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). The renewing of our mind involves a fundamental shift away from the belief that the brain is the basis of mental activity to a spiritual understanding that the incorporeal, divine Mind is the only Mind.

As this shift occurs, the inward voice is less and less seen to be our own thinking and pondering, and more and more understood to be the guiding voice of divine Love, leading us to “that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” We all, without exception, have been endowed with the full and inalienable ability to hear Love's message and receive its blessing.

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## God's message at eventide

*Barb Goodspeed Grant*

Sun sinks west

at God's behest;  
as I look east,  
my glorious feast  
is pink—  
like lemonade.

Pink sea, pink hulls,  
pink sand, pink gulls,  
I watch, gaze fixed,  
as colors, remixed,  
delight—  
like a child's smile.

This beauty at  
the edge of night  
hints the heart  
of Soul's pure light  
is Love—  
Love's kiss before bed.

God's all around;  
let joy abound.  
Our Mother, ever near,  
says, "Peace, be still,  
My little one—  
for I am always here."

**Barb Goodspeed Grant**

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## Embracing our communities in spiritual love

*Gloria Cecilia Caro Valderrama*

Originally published in Spanish

**I have found** that I cannot remain indifferent when confronted with distressing news in my community and the wider world. Reports of deceptive practices, authoritarianism, and violence seem pervasive and need everyone's prayers. We may think we are

powerless to do anything about them, though. Sometimes I've asked myself, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Psalms 78:19). In other words, Is God capable of helping us? Can I really pray about this and have faith that my prayers will forward a solution? Many years ago, my eyes were opened to the fact that we can answer *yes*, with certainty and joy.

I had heard distressing news in my community that presented a dark picture of disruption and lawlessness. There were reported incidents of vandalism, and graffiti was found on the walls of educational and government institutions. Everything pointed to young people in the region who were dissatisfied with the mayor's office and rebelling against what they felt were violations of government policies guaranteeing quality education and food for children with scarce resources, as well as job opportunities for young people.

As I prayed, the spiritual insights that came to me illumined my thought and instantly made my sadness cease. I felt assured that everything is, and will be, well because God, good, does not change. He is the same eternal and infinite divine Love, the omnipresent and only power, yesterday and today. God created man in His image and likeness, and man expresses God.

Instead of worrying, I occupied my time by endeavoring to obey what Christ Jesus identified as the most important commandments: to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. I acknowledged that there is one infinite God, Love, illuminating the thoughts of everyone in the community, including the young protesters, and that this Love guides and governs us all with infinite tenderness. God sees all of His children as innocent, pure, and loving, because they are created in His image and likeness, and are therefore free from violence, hatred, and revenge. I maintained these light-filled thoughts, recognizing that darkness and evil cannot exist, for evil has no space in the allness of omnipresent Love.

I became more conscious of God's almighty power correcting whatever is unjust in the world, including in education and government. And I endeavored to see everyone as God sees them—honest and selfless, free from impure motives and dishonesty, and expressing

only the qualities of God. I saw that these spiritual qualities were a part of our government and that God's power and peace are seen and felt. I recognized that dishonesty and selfish, impure motives are human weaknesses. These do not exist in God or in His creation, which are only good. God is light and there is no darkness in light. I acknowledged that God, divine Mind, was already in control and governing everything.

A couple of months later, I was grateful to learn that the mayoral administration was recognized for the honesty and integrity with which it had used and distributed the resources of the municipality and built the budgeted works. I didn't witness or see any further reporting of violence against the municipal government, and peace returned to the streets.

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy writes: "One infinite God, good, unifies men and nations; constitutes the brotherhood of man; ends wars; fulfils the Scripture, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself;' annihilates pagan and Christian idolatry,—whatever is wrong in social, civil, criminal, political, and religious codes; equalizes the sexes; annuls the curse on man, and leaves nothing that can sin, suffer, be punished or destroyed" (p. 340). On numerous occasions this passage has given me confidence in God's ability to unify and govern mankind.

More recently, I again felt a sense of sadness and disappointment lift, this time after the problem of misleading advertising arose in our community. It had become common for chain stores and supermarkets in our country to offer benefits that they did not then deliver. I had experienced this.

In my prayers, I acknowledged that in the omnipresence of all-powerful divine Love, neither deception nor loss can occur. This was true for me and everyone. I thanked God and affirmed that He is the same forever, always in control, correcting whatever is wrong and governing man. I prayed that fear could not prevail in my community or in any part of the world. I affirmed that "immortal Mind, governing all, must be acknowledged as supreme in the physical realm, so-called, as well as in the spiritual" (*Science and Health*, p. 427).

Days later I went to buy something I needed, and a woman who worked at the store approached me and told me that when I paid, she would be waiting for me to give me a gift to which I was entitled for having bought that item. I received another store item free of charge, and the value was greater than the promised benefit that they had not previously given me.

This was evidence to me, once again, that God's law of harmony and peace is always present and operating. Any appearance of inharmony and evil can be rebuked—and healed—through the understanding of our unbroken relationship to God and of His intelligent and equitable government of His creation.

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## Image and Inspiration

*The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.*

—**Proverbs 16:17**

Photograph by Carol Ames Sewell  
Sequin, Texas, US

Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park, Montana, US

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## Lose defensiveness, feel free

*Sandy Graham*

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**I have a dear friend** I communicate with every day via a video phone app. So when I felt incensed by something she said and considered not talking with her daily, I knew it would be a big change in her life as well as mine. I wasn't sure that what I felt to be my entirely justifiable anger was worth the change in our friendship.

My clenched stomach, however, would not let me just forget about her comments. Big feelings and angry objections swirled around in my thought. But I was wise enough to stop and think before I responded to her video. I asked myself, "How would Jesus act in such a situation?"

The Gospel of John relates an incident involving a woman condemned for sinning, in which Christ Jesus states that only an individual who had not sinned should be allowed to cast the first stone at her (see 8:1-11). This rebuke of self-righteousness protected the woman from harm when all of her accusers walked away without throwing a single stone. The fact that Jesus rebuked self-righteousness made me wonder if I needed to rebuke self-righteousness in myself.

I felt that I was being led by God to consider humility. How could I express it? Should I? What would I be giving up if I were to act and think meekly?

The Bible encourages meekness in those who love God. In First Timothy, for instance, we read: "But thou, O man of God, . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (6:11).

I acknowledged that, with humility, I could concede that it was possible that my friend's point of view was accurate. With that, I was able to let go of my initial reaction. It felt so good to lose the anger, blame, and hurt and to embrace humility, trust, and Christlike love. I felt free to express love toward my friend and was grateful to know that I wasn't merely sweeping hurt feelings aside in order to maintain our friendship.

These lines from the *Christian Science Hymnal* helped me define how I want to live my life and how I wanted to act in that inharmonious situation:

Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my every thought, to use

In the way that Thou shalt choose.

(Frances R. Havergal, No. 324, adapt. © CSBD)

It felt so freeing to let go of defensiveness and feel active love! And I've been trying to receive the world's news with this same humility, which has been equally liberating. It has eliminated outrage in my responses and helped me maintain a sense of balance. God is greater than all human institutions. Remembering this is a daily prayer that can shed healing light.

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## I had to find out for myself

*John Simon*

**My dad was** a good man and a good country doctor who would make house calls well into the night. One day, when I was about ten years old, a new family moved into our neighborhood. They were Christian Scientists. My parents, knowing no more of Christian Science than the general medical literature provided, cast subtle aspersions on them.

Ten years later, my dad told me that the various maladies of an overwhelming percentage of the patients who came to his office with medical problems were entirely mental in nature. His words stuck with me and were foundational in preparing me to later embrace Christian Science. It helped me realize that being aware of my thinking was crucial. I could either accept a particular physical complaint as my reality or I could say, in the words of Jesus, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Luke 4:8). Many thoughts that come to us are suggestions rather than facts or truth, and I could choose where to put my faith and trust. This was a major awakening for me.

My growth in Christian Science was gradual, the result of an accumulation of insights. At first, I saw others healed. My wife was healed of infectious hepatitis (see Caroline Cox-Simon, "When I read a testimony in an issue of the . . .," *The Christian Science Journal*, April

1990), and our six-year-old son was healed of hearing problems. I began to turn my thoughts away from the belief that we are helpless in the face of disease to the knowledge that God is our omnipresent healer.

The first personal evidence I had of Christian Science's efficacy was one year when, like all of us each year, I was subjected to the barrage of media warnings about flu season. But this time, armed with what I now knew to be true, I realized that the flu had no power, and I was quickly healed of its symptoms. Now, when I feel the incipient signs of a "flu bug," I take a stand and deny that it has any power at all to affect my well-being because God, good, is the only power.

Since then, I have had many healings—of fevers, poison ivy, stomach pain, arthritis, Lyme disease, "the blues," etc. As kind and skilled as my father was, he misunderstood the power of Christian Science. Like many who have made medicine their profession, he was unaware of Christian Science as an effective healing practice. But Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, "Millions of unprejudiced minds—simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert—are waiting and watching for rest and drink" (p. 570).

It's my hope that seekers everywhere, whether in the medical profession or not, can discover Christian Science and grow in the understanding of God's healing power as I did and bring the benefits of Christian Science into their lives.

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## KIDS

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# My throat didn't hurt anymore

*Guadalupe*

**My name is Guadalupe.** I am nine years old, and I live in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I go to Christian Science Sunday School. In Sunday School, I've learned how to pray to God. I've also learned that God is Love.

Here is a healing I had from thinking about what I've learned in Sunday School.

One day my throat was hurting very much. Then I had an idea. The idea was that because God is perfect, I am also perfect. So there is no place for sickness.

After that, my throat didn't hurt anymore.

Thinking about how God is always with us, taking care of us, and loving us makes me feel happy. •

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## HEALINGS

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# Knee injury healed

*Julie Weed*

Last spring when I was skiing, I fell with both knees twisted and heard popping sounds as it happened. Initially I exclaimed to my husband that I was hurt and needed help, but then I recalled what Christian Science teaches about reversing such fears.

"Stand porter at the door of thought," Mary Baker Eddy instructs in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. "Admitting only such conclusions as you wish realized in bodily results, you will control yourself harmoniously" (p. 392).

The conclusion that I affirmed was the truth that as God's child I am always perfect and whole; therefore, the claim that I could be hurt was not a fact but a suggestion. I quickly rejected that suggestion and shouted back across the ski hill to my husband, "Never mind; I'm fine. I just remembered that I'm spiritual, God's reflection, and can't be injured."

Then another fear came to thought: "You might regret saying that. You are supposed to go on a bicycling



vacation in a few weeks, and now you might not even be able to ride, so months of training will be out the window!" But looking instead to Christ, the true idea of God, I was immediately assured of my eternal safety and joy. I considered the promise in the twenty-third Psalm that I "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (verse 6). Flinging away what I knew to be aggressive lies, I got up, straightened my skis, and carefully skied down.

When I arrived home, I called a Christian Science practitioner to pray with me to handle recurring suggestions of injury and pain. Having been healed through prayer many times before, I was confident that I could rely fully on Christian Science this time, too.

The practitioner shared this instruction from *Science and Health*: "We must seek the undivided garment, the whole Christ, as our first proof of Christianity, for Christ, Truth, alone can furnish us with absolute evidence" (p. 142). This helped me appreciate the value of feeling certain of God's uninterrupted care for me.

After that, we read the Lord's Prayer from the King James Version of the Bible. It was then that I noticed two words—*it is*: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9, 10). Those two words jumped out at me, reinforcing the absolute fact that *it is* God's good will; *it is* established in earth just as *it is* in heaven; and there is nothing but harmony in God's creation.

This realization helped me gain the spiritual sense that I already dwell in heaven. The practitioner affirmed that as God's expression I am always upright, pure, and perfect; therefore, I never fell in the first place. She added that this spiritual fact overcomes the belief of susceptibility to accident and injury.

Further insight came from this statement: "Christian Science never healed a patient without proving with mathematical certainty that error, when found out, is two-thirds destroyed, and the remaining third kills itself" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 210). Error is self-destructive when we recognize that it is error. A mistake cannot have any power, and we are not in a realm of mistakes; we're in

the realm of divine Principle. The law of God annuls any supposed laws of physics, physicality, or mortality.

The pain in my knees disappeared after this one metaphysical treatment and did not return. I never experienced any swelling. My husband and I went on our bicycling trip a few weeks later, and I rode many miles up and down steep roads with strength and joy. I am so thankful for the certainty of Christian Science, God's law of good, and for the loving guidance and prayers available from Christian Science practitioners.

The Bible's spiritual meaning and significance are explained so clearly in *Science and Health*. We are blessed beyond measure when we know absolutely that we are unchangeable, precious, and greatly beloved children of our Father-Mother God.

**Julie Weed**

*Leadville, Colorado, US*

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## No more heart trouble

*Shelly Richardson*

The beauty and significance of Jesus' teaching and demonstration is that he proved in his healing work and resurrection the allness of Spirit, God—that there is no opposing power. He said of the belief in a power other than God, good: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). As we, like Jesus, put all our weight on the side of spiritual reality, we gain an abundant and graceful understanding of God's goodness that cannot be taken from us.

So what does it look like to put all of our weight on the side of Spirit? I have found that it begins with a willingness to let go of a personality defined by heredity or human history, as well as with a humble acceptance and generous expression of the pure, holy, spiritual selfhood created by God.

When I was a young adult, I took a physical exam for a summer job. The doctor told me I had a heart murmur. He gave me the OK to work but suggested I monitor the condition. My study of Christian Science, learning about my purely spiritual nature as God's expression, had always provided the help I needed with any illness, so I didn't think about the doctor's diagnosis a lot. But I took notice some years later when my father and two of his brothers needed heart surgery at a fairly young age, and I didn't entirely let go of the impression that made on me. I knew I needed to wholeheartedly refute the suggestion that God had created me less than whole and perfect.

Then about ten years ago, although I regularly had been walking three to four miles each day, I started feeling fatigued after walking just a few blocks. I blamed it on the summer heat and humidity until one day I felt aggressive and painful symptoms associated with heart problems.

I called a Christian Science practitioner, and over several weeks we prayed together. He reminded me that God is always reliable and that Truth—God—and man as Truth's reflection are uninvadable. I also discovered that I had been entertaining thoughts about myself as a limited, mortal being. Those thoughts needed to be removed to make room for clearer thinking about my relationship to God.

As I put my prayer completely on the side of God, Spirit, fearlessly affirming that I am God's image—spiritual, immortal, holy, loving, and active—the pain left and my strength was restored. I have had no more symptoms associated with this problem since. I am physically active and never think twice about vigorous activity.

Jesus came to prove to each of us that we can live with abundance and vibrancy. His spiritually scientific understanding and proof of the nature of God, Life, and of man's eternal unity with Life enable us to put all our mental weight on the side of eternal, painless Life—and to live. I am so deeply grateful for this healing—for the opportunity to put all on the side of Truth, spiritual reality, and witness the effective operation of this healing Science.

**Shelly Richardson**

*Eugene, Oregon, US*

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## A provable Science

*Kathie Bell*

**My husband and I** have an outdoor griddle that gets extremely hot. One day, we were hosting a picnic, and I was standing at the griddle. As I was placing a piece of cheese on a burger, I felt my fingertip touch the hot grease. I jumped at the pain, and the person next to me asked if I had burned my finger.

Since I was feeling hurried by the cooking process, I simply said that I was fine and continued on without giving the issue any prayerful attention. The pain continued for a while, and the evidence of a burn lingered for a couple of weeks, until it finally faded away.

Interestingly, something similar happened to me another time, but I took a decidedly different approach—with much better results!

On that day, I had been adding sliced potatoes to the griddle when I felt my fingertip touch the sizzling oil. I realized I had a choice to make at that moment—to pray or not to pray.

My thought went to an episode of the *Sentinel Watch* podcast that I had listened to several times (“Love that really heals,” with T. Michael Fish, JSH-Online.com, April 8, 2024). In it, the guest speaks about “unselfed love,” referring to the first line of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, which says, “The prayer that reforms the sinner and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God,—a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love” (p. 1).

The guest explained love that is “unselfed” as meaning that we remove “self” from the picture—get our own fear, agenda, and worries out of the way—in order to

see and humbly realize that all power belongs to God, divine Love. I wondered how I might remove myself from this trouble and express unselfed love.

It came to me that if I thought the hot oil and griddle had any power, then I would be denying that God is the one and only power. So I acknowledged right then that God is the only power. I held to that truth, knowing that God is only good and that nothing can overpower Him.

I went on with my cooking, and the pain stopped. When I looked at my finger later that evening, there was no evidence of a burn.

These two experiences were so similar in detail, but so startlingly different in approach and results; it's clear to me that Christian Science is provable when applied.

### **Kathie Bell**

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, US

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## BIBLE LENS

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# Life

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## from the Responsive Reading

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### **Psalms 34:3, 8, 12, 17, 22**

*O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. . . . O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. . . . What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? . . . The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. . . . The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Like several other psalms—9/10 (considered one poem), 25, 34, 37, III, I12, I19, I45—this one is an acrostic in which each section begins with a sequential letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Some sources believe that

alphabetical poems helped listeners remember texts, and one points out that “the alphabet is a ready metaphor for totality and completeness . . . and thus serves as an excellent frame for praising the qualities of God.”

*Desolate* is translated from the Hebrew term *'āšam*, indicating guilt and offense—and many versions render it *condemned*. Because verse 22 is both an addition to the acrostic format and the psalm's final line, scholars view its message as emphatic: God's faithful are never blameworthy or condemned.

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## from Section 1

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### **2 | Psalms 27:1, 4, 13, 14**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; . . . One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. . . . I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

*Nō'am*, the Hebrew word rendered *beauty*, implies kindness, pleasantness, and grace rather than physical loveliness. In Proverbs 3:17, it describes wisdom: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness [*nō'am*], and all her paths are peace.” And it is related to *Naomi*, the name of Ruth's mother-in-law.

Verse 14 echoes early charges to and by Joshua to be strong, courageous, and expectant of God's deliverance (see Deuteronomy 31:7; Joshua 1:6, 7; 10:25).

### **3 | Colossians 3:10**

*Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

In this and the next chapter of Colossians, the author lays out the sense of being risen, or resurrected, with Christ. For believers, living this life means embracing a

Christly standard of thought and behavior *now*—letting go of harmful habits, mistaken values, and wrongdoing, and honoring their God-given nature. The theme of renewal occurs in other New Testament epistles as well (see, for example, Romans 8:29; I Corinthians 15:49; II Corinthians 5:17, citation 13).

“After the image of him that created him” is seen as a reference to the likeness of God presented in Genesis 1:26, 27. Similar wording (“after God”) appears in Ephesians 4:23, 24 (citation 8).

#### 4 | Amos 5:6

*Seek the Lord, and ye shall live.*

Originally from the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos was called to prophesy circa 760 BC in the northern kingdom of Israel. He was likely the first to put his prophecy in writing—introducing the pattern of foretelling both God’s judgment on disobedience to His covenant and His mercy on those who seek Him.

“The promise of life was a potent one,” explains a commentary, “for in Hebrew the word ‘life’ (*hāyâ*) did not mean just ‘existence,’ but the possession of full vitality, health, and even reputation and prosperity.”

### from Section 2

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#### 5 | Psalms 21:1, 4

*The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! . . . He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*

Linked to the preceding psalm of petition for divine deliverance in battle, Psalm 21 is a royal prayer of thanksgiving for this help. While monarchs of this period commonly depended on and celebrated their own power, David models the leadership that ascribes strength—and life itself—to God.

#### 6 | Psalms 90:1, 2, 4, 14

*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. . . . For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. . . . O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*

#### Translation

*Lord, you have been our home  
since the beginning.*

*Before the mountains were born,  
and before you created the earth and the world,  
you are God.*

*You have always been, and you will always be.*

. . . . .

*To you, a thousand years  
is like the passing of a day.*

*It passes like an hour in the night.*

. . . . .

*Fill us with your love every morning.*

*Then we will sing and rejoice all our lives.*

—International Children’s Bible<sup>®</sup>

*Mā’ôn*, the Hebrew term translated *dwelling place*, can also be rendered *refuge*. In this poem, the only one attributed to Moses, its use captures the spiritual significance of home for a people who had no fixed habitation for over forty years.

Verses 1–5 were the inspiration for the well-loved hymn by Isaac Watts, “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past” (altered by John Wesley to read “O God . . .”; see Hymn 213 in the *Christian Science Hymnal*). About the biblical text a scholar notes, “The swift passing of [man’s] stay upon earth would render it meaningless and purposeless, were it not that God is everlasting and in Him is man’s abiding dwelling-place.”

## 7 | Galatians 6:8

*He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

### Translation

*... if you plant in the soil of your spiritual nature, you will harvest everlasting life.*

—GOD'S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

## 8 | Ephesians 4:23, 24

*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; . . . Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

### Translation

*. . . be continually renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh, untarnished mental and spiritual attitude], . . . put on the new self [the regenerated and renewed nature], created in God's image, [godlike] in the righteousness and holiness of the truth [living in a way that expresses to God your gratitude for your salvation].*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

## from Section 3

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## 10 | Proverbs 16:22

*Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it.*

### Translation

*Understanding (spiritual insight) is a [refreshing and boundless] wellspring of life to those who have it. . . .*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

## 12 | John 4:5–7, 9, 10, 14

*Then cometh [Jesus] to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. . . . Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Typically, an unchaperoned meeting between a man and woman was prohibited in ancient Israel. Although Jesus' disciples had left him alone in order to buy food (see v. 8), the Master did not allow rigid interpretation of Hebrew law to overrule kindness and generosity. And though free conversation between a Jew and a Samaritan was deemed equally unacceptable, the setting for this remarkable interchange—a well believed to have been dug by the patriarch Jacob, revered in both religious traditions—was a natural place for conventional walls to be broken down.

“Living water” usually alluded to fresh, sweet water, and this is the sense the woman assumes. Jesus, however, is portraying the life-giving knowledge of God in Christ.

## 13 | II Corinthians 5:17

*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

## Translation

*... anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

—New Living Translation

Paul employs the words “in Christ” dozens of times in his letters to his fellow Christians, reminding them of their unity with Christ and exhorting them to preserve this relationship—and their Christly bond with one another—through faith.

*Creature* is translated from the Greek word *ktisis*, indicating the thing made, the creating activity, or all of creation. One source reflects that transformation in Christ is so complete that it is equivalent to an act of creation.

## from Section 4

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### 14 | Colossians 3:3

*Your life is hid with Christ in God.*

“Hid with Christ” recalls Hebrew Bible assurances, especially from Psalms. These poets sing, “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion” and “Thou art my hiding place and my shield” (27:5; 119:114). In the epistle to the Colossians, the metaphor promises security and protection for followers of Christ.

### 15 | Luke 8:41, 42, 49–55

*There came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus’ feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying. . . . There cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue’s house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed*

*him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.*

Jesus’ action of removing mourners and onlookers is conveyed by the Greek verb *ekballō*, a term that can denote vehemence. It occurs in accounts of the Savior’s casting out of devils (see example in Mark 1:39) and in the admonition to “cast out [*ekballō*] the beam out of thine own eye” (Matthew 7:5).

In touching the girl’s hand, Jesus violates a Jewish law banning contact with a dead body—contact that rendered one ritually impure for a week. Working from a God-enlightened viewpoint, he confirms her spiritual purity and effects the healing.

### 16 | Romans 8:6, 35, 37

*To be spiritually minded is life and peace. . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

## Translation

*... the mind ruled by the Spirit brings life and peace. . . . Who can separate us from Christ’s love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? . . . No! In all these things we are more than winners! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us.*

—New International Reader’s Version™

Paul’s witness to the love of God and His Christ is comprehensive and unshakable. This love, a commentary suggests, “reaches into the depths of human despair, embraces those who live in the shadow of death . . . , looks at the present with clear faith and at the future with sure hope, overpowers all powers that might get in the way, . . . and declares to the world that . . . in [the Messiah] love has won the victory.”

## 17 | Romans 6:4, 23

*As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. . . . The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### Translation

*As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life. . . . the gift that God freely gives is everlasting life found in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

—GOD'S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

## from Section 5

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## 19 | Psalms 16:8, 9, 11

*I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. . . . Thou wilt shew me the path of life.*

### Translation

*I know the LORD is always with me.  
I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.  
No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.  
My body rests in safety.*

. . . . .

*You will show me the way of life. . . .*

—New Living Translation

## 20 | Revelation 21:3–5

*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.*

## Translation

*“Look! God now makes his home with the people. He will live with them. They will be his people. And God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death.’ And there will be no more sadness. There will be no more crying or pain. Things are no longer the way they used to be.” He who was sitting on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”*

—New International Reader's Version<sup>™</sup>

Tabernacles, and later the Temple at Jerusalem, had been the focal point of Jewish worship. The book of Revelation shows God to be omnipresent, not limited to a sacred space in a physical structure.

Thrones are familiar symbols of power in Hebrew Scripture (see Psalms 47:8; Isaiah 66:1, for instance). The Revelator uses this image over thirty times, far more than any other biblical writer.

## from Section 6

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## 23 | Isaiah 38:19

*The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.*

### Translation

*Only the living can thank you,  
as I am doing today.  
Each generation tells the next  
about your faithfulness.*

—Contemporary English Version

Read a related article, “Newness of life” by L. Ivimy Gwalter, at [cssentinel.com/newness-life](http://cssentinel.com/newness-life)

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## LETTERS & CONVERSATIONS

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## Letters & Conversations

*Astrid Leaf-Wright, Ellen White, Dan Ziskind, Laura Pearson*

> **E. Nomi Naidu, “No more desire for alcohol,” Sentinel, November 18, 2024**

What a wonderful demonstration. We all need to know that we are good enough.

**Astrid Leaf-Wright, Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa**

> **Scott Jenkins, “Climate and God’s changeless love,” Sentinel, November 11, 2024**

I loved the inspiration the author shared about encountering a tornado while piloting his plane—and how he was inspired to make changes to live more gently and efficiently.

**Ellen White, Cherrylog, Georgia, US**



> **Gretchen Newby, “A spiritual approach to peacemaking,” *Sentinel*, November 11, 2024**

I have this poem displayed in a prominent place so I can refer to it easily and frequently. Thank you.

**Dan Ziskind, Ballwin, Missouri, US**

> **Kate Mullane Robertson, “A secure home,” *Sentinel*, November 4, 2024**

I loved the sentiment. God has been my compass during many moves.

**Laura Pearson, Tarpon Springs, Florida, US**

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