



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

December 23, 2024 Vol. 126 | No. 51-52

EDITORIAL

- 2 **Following the star**
Lisa Rennie Sytsma

ARTICLES

- 3 **Christmastime goodwill... always**
Suzanne Riedel
- 4 **God holds Her child**
Kit Cornell Kurtz
- 5 **Honoring Christ through our lives**
Mónica B. Esefer Passaglia
- 6 **Image and Inspiration**
- 7 **My thinking about life shifted to a spiritual basis**
Ronald R. Fontana
- 8 **A new member of the Christian Science Board of Directors**
The Christian Science Board of Directors

KIDS

- 9 **Celebrating Christmas... before Christmas!**
Sentinel staff

HEALINGS

- 10 **A Christmas gift**
Mary Valentine
- 11 **Discolored spot gone**
Rhett Rinne
- 11 **Able to hike again**
Nancy New

BIBLE LENS

- 13 **Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?**

18 **Christian Science**

LETTERS & CONVERSATIONS

- 24 **Letters & Conversations**
Linda Noren, Kim C. Korinek, Jobie Townshend-Zellner

Following the star

Lisa Rennie Sytsma

It's not easy to locate, let alone put yourself exactly at, what navigators call a star's substellar point, the precise spot on Earth that is directly under a star at any given moment. No star visible at night is strong enough to light up even a pinpoint on the ground to confirm that you're directly under it. So you need a sextant. The wise men in the Bible's book of Matthew—the ones looking for the baby Jesus—didn't have a sextant. That navigation tool wouldn't be invented for centuries. This probably explains why, though they were following a star, they also stopped to ask Herod, the king of Judea, for directions (see 2:1–12).

Herod's advisors knew only the prophecy that one who would rule Israel would come out of Bethlehem. But the wise men's question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" convinced Herod that this child was a threat to his crown, and he plotted to kill him. He asked the wise men to tell him when they found the child, pretending that he wanted to pay homage. The wise men did find Jesus and offer their gifts. Then they left without returning to Herod, having been warned by God of the king's plans.

But why did Herod need directions from them? After he spoke with them, the star seems to have begun to shine with such intensity that, unlike any other star in the night sky, it lit up its substellar point, the stable where Mary had given birth to Jesus. The wise men just followed the star. So why then couldn't Herod's assassins simply follow that light just as the wise men had?

If neither Herod nor his men could see that light, it must not have been a physical form of light—photons emanating from a material star. Shepherds in a field caring for their sheep also saw a light with no material source and heard an angel voice announcing Christ Jesus' birth (see Luke 2:8–20). The light that wise men and shepherds could see but jealous kings could not

must have been a holy light, so far removed from sensualism, greed, materialism, and the lust for power that those indulging those traits were incapable of discerning it. As the Gospel of John puts it, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (1:5).

But the fact that Herod couldn't see that light doesn't mean it wasn't shining for him. God's light shines on and for all of us, all the time. The epistle of First John tells us, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1:5).

The heart that sees that ever-present light, even faintly, is the yearning heart actively striving to know God, Love. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, states in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "The wakeful shepherd beholds the first faint morning beams, ere cometh the full radiance of a risen day. So shone the pale star to the prophet-shepherds; yet it traversed the night, and came where, in cradled obscurity, lay the Bethlehem babe, the human herald of Christ, Truth, who would make plain to benighted understanding the way of salvation through Christ Jesus, till across a night of error should dawn the morning beams and shine the guiding star of being. The Wisemen were led to behold and to follow this daystar of divine Science, lighting the way to eternal harmony" (p. vii).

God's light reveals all that He made—His creation—as beautiful, perfect, and good. But if our understanding is "benighted," to use Mrs. Eddy's word, we can see neither that light nor the wonderful spiritual creation it reveals. Even if the light at first seemed dim to the hearts of the wise men and shepherds, their innocence, purity, love of the good and the beautiful, and love of God kept them moving in the direction of the light they did see, until they reached their goal.

Maybe we don't feel so innocent or pure. Maybe we're afraid the light, shining on us, will reveal sin instead of goodness, ugliness instead of beauty, decay instead of vitality. But remember who was illuminated under the star of Bethlehem. Jesus was "the human herald of Christ, Truth." He would show us the way out of sin, fear, ugliness, disease, depression, and even death. He

said he was sent to call sinners, not to condemnation, but to repentance and salvation (see Luke 5:32). We have no record of him condemning a single individual who came to him for help, whether sick or sinful. Rather, he freed them from sin and disease and lifted every single one into the light of health and holiness. He opened their eyes to see that their true, spiritual individuality was, like his, illuminated in its eternal perfection by the light of Truth. They and we are, in reality, forever the cherished children of our Father-Mother, God, never left out of His tender love.

The same light that shone for wise men and shepherds is shining for us today. Even if it at first seems faint, we don't need a sextant or a human king's directions to find it (nor can a king—or anyone—prevent us from finding that light). We just need sincerity, humility, self-denial, persistence, and hope. And we need love—a love of God and our fellow man. A love so great that we're willing to leave behind anger, hatred, greed, revenge, selfishness, and anything else that would hide the light. As we follow that star, it will grow brighter until we see that we've never been out of its shining, infinite substellar point, that radiantly lit stable in our heart where the healing Christ is revealed.

Lisa Rennie Sytsma, Associate Editor

ARTICLES

Christmastime goodwill. . . always

All of us, as children of God, divine Love, have an innate desire to live in peace, whether or not it is apparent.

Suzanne Riedel

For ages, many have acknowledged that practicing peace and goodwill is fundamental to human life. A few examples of this come to mind, such as the 2023 Academy Award-winning short animated film *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* (based on a book by Charlie

Mackesy). In the film, the mole asks the boy what he wants to be when he grows up. The boy's immediate answer is "Kind."

Human gravitation toward goodwill, or benevolence, is also explored in Charles Dickens' iconic *A Christmas Carol*. In it, Ebenezer Scrooge's hardened rejection of good is transformed as he eventually feels the true spirit of Christmas. In such tales, the takeaway is often that kindness and goodwill are innate to the human heart and prevail even when people's opinions and beliefs are threatened. They are qualities that are basic to a peaceful, thriving society.

The Christmas story from the Bible, narrating events surrounding the birth of Jesus, is the ultimate example of goodwill—a goodwill that is divine. The message itself elicits hope for lasting peace and better lives for individuals and the world. At Jesus' birth, the Gospel of Luke relates, angels heralded to nearby shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (2:14). That promise is meant for all humanity for all time.

Jesus' birth story is rooted in the power of God, Spirit, to govern His own divinely created offspring. And Jesus' advent on earth as the highest earthly representative of God made plain the true idea, or understanding of God, that alone has the power to actually transform the character of humankind. Animosity, anger, lack, and fear give way to harmony, peace, abundance, and an enlarged love in the light of Christ, Truth.

Christian Science teaches how that Christly transformation happens, regardless of one's circumstances, past or present. Mary Baker Eddy describes this Science as "the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony" (*Rudimental Divine Science*, p. 1). Offering a road map to learning more of that universal law, she also wrote: "The present stage of progress in Christian Science presents two opposite aspects,—a full-orbed promise, and a gaunt want. The need, however, is not of the letter, but the spirit" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 355).

Learning the nature of God as Love itself, as the divine Principle and law of good for all creation, leads us to

realize that we can—and ultimately must—emulate the love and peace and healing power that Jesus’ life and ministry modeled. All men and women, as children of God, divine Love, have an innate desire to live in peace, whether or not it is apparent. Being kind is a good start, and necessary! But to demonstrate Christly love, peace, and goodwill toward men, so that human experience is transformed to the high model Jesus lived and taught, requires so much more than human goodness. It requires leaning on God daily to show us the way.

Jesus’ mission illustrated the healing that inevitably follows when we glimpse the fact that God’s love is actually a divine law of universal good. The angels’ message to the shepherds at Jesus’ birth was more than just an announcement of a sacred event. It was the eternal proclamation of every individual’s God-given capacity to *express* divine Love’s universal goodwill.

Many years ago, I had an experience that helped me better understand that divine Love has power to deliver us from the “gaunt want” of heartache and even physical suffering and lead us to the “full-orbed promise” of healing.

I was a relatively new student of Christian Science and was praying persistently about some extreme difficulties in extended family relationships. My husband and I and our young child had moved far away from relatives whom we saw as difficult. But we still felt unduly influenced by them when it came to our lives and well-being. I prayed daily to recognize the truth that God-given freedom and peace were ours. And I wholeheartedly prayed to forgive and love our relatives more every day.

Then one summer morning, out of the blue, a migraine—a recurring challenge—jolted me. And a pattern that I feared followed: Within minutes those relatives called and said they were flying in to see us that day. I prayed to handle the fear of both looming difficulties with them and the physical pain. This went on for several hours as I strove to love even more than I had before, knowing that thoughts emanating from God, Love, harmonize and heal. But the pain got worse.

About an hour before our relatives were to arrive, I asked God with all my heart to show me what I needed to learn. Then I opened the Bible to the angelic proclamation, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” With this came a flash of holy inspiration—that when I was young, I loved Christmas, not because of presents or festivities, but because I felt more peace and goodwill among family members and others during that season. The clear message to me at that moment was that love and peace are the universal effect of God, infinite Love, touching human thought, always. Good is the innate expression of God’s nature in every one of us.

Immediately, the pain stopped. It was as if I’d heard God speaking this timeless truth, “That is the kind of Love I am—universal; and you express it.” The freedom from pain and the peaceful interchanges in my family during that visit have been so memorable to me. Not only did I learn how to pray better about family peace going forward, but this was one of the last times I ever had a migraine. It wasn’t long before they stopped completely.

In Mrs. Eddy’s *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* we read, “Universal Love is the divine way in Christian Science” (p. 266). And all of us have been given the capacity to understand and be blessed by this.

No wonder the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest”! Peace and goodwill are here to stay.

God holds Her child

Kit Cornell Kurtz

Christmas:
 dawning,
 opening,
 unfolding,
of thought,
of revelation,

of being—
this is Love
in action.

This is
the Christ,
bringing to all
peace,
joy,
harmony.
Truth fills all space;
Life lights the way;
and God holds Her child.

Drawn close,
gently cherished,
lifted and loved,
in heaven abiding,
securely resting,
joyfully living,

here we are,
living with the promise of the Bethlehem babe,
you and me and all,
children
of our Father-Mother
God.

Kit Cornell Kurtz

Honoring Christ through our lives

*Expressing our God-given Christly nature is truly the spirit of
Christmas—the spirit of Christ that we can all feel in our hearts.*

Mónica B. Esefer Passaglia

Originally published in Spanish

The Christmas season, a celebration of the advent of Christ Jesus, has long been a busy time: meeting with friends, buying presents, parties in the workplace,

cooking, coordinating. Sometimes, however, in the midst of so many activities, people end up wondering why they can't feel the satisfying spirit of Christ that they long for.

The message of the Christmas story goes far beyond festivities and cheer. Mary's spiritual conception of Jesus enabled him to demonstrate his true spiritual selfhood as the Christ, the Son of God. He taught, and gave countless proofs of, what it means to be the child of God: to be free from sin, sickness, and even death. He lived in constant communion with his divine Father. Jesus loved God and all mankind, expressing this love through concrete actions: He healed countless people.

Jesus demonstrated that we are all children of God and that, as the first chapter of Genesis explains, we are created in the image of God, Spirit—totally good, innocent, and spiritual. His life demonstrated this divine model of man.

Although the physical man Jesus isn't here with us today, we learn in Christian Science that Christ is "the true idea of God" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 316), which is timeless and with us always. As I've thought about how we honor Christ, I remember the wise men, who took a long journey to see and give gifts to the promised Messiah. Mrs. Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, has this to say about them: "As the Wisemen grew in the understanding of Christ, the spiritual idea, it grew in favor with them. Thus it will continue, as it shall become understood, until man be found in the actual likeness of his Maker. Their highest human concept of the man Jesus, that portrayed him as the only Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth, will become so magnified to human sense, by means of the lens of Science, as to reveal man collectively, as individually, to be the son of God" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 164).

Expressing our God-given Christly nature is truly the spirit of Christmas—the spirit of Christ that we can all feel in our hearts. Today, divine Science reveals to us the spiritual perspective of life: Life as God, Spirit. We live with gratitude for the spiritual truth that Jesus was revealing.

Wishing to feel the spirit of Christ more deeply, we could consider what gifts of value we give to the world. The wise men gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Savior—all three very valuable at that time. In our time, we should think deeply about how we honor Christ through our lives—asking ourselves what we are willing to offer on a daily basis. Living Christly qualities helps us put aside materialistic distractions, apathy, and mental darkness, and show forth the light of Christ, the illuminated reality of Life. This can be our gift to the world. And today we can prove the power of the advent of Christ through healing.

Years ago, I started having pain in my knees. They made noise when I sat down or stood up, and I felt friction and discomfort. I was afraid every time I had to move.

I turned to God in prayer, with consecration, longing to feel loved, protected, and well. I recognized that I am the creation of God and that, as a daughter of God, I am the image and likeness of Spirit, divine Life, invariable Love, and reflect the divine substance. I am always whole and intact, free and flexible, and therefore experience freedom of movement. So there was really no room for friction, suffering, loss of substance, or deterioration. I also prayed to know that I reflect God's love and cannot live in friction or conflict with others.

I felt at peace, but the symptoms persisted. Continued prayer brought expectancy of good, and I felt the influence of Christ bringing a pure message that assured me, "You are anointed with fresh oil." I recognized this concept as coming from a Bible verse (see Psalms 92:10). There is also a connection here to the wise men, as one of them gave Jesus myrrh, which is thought to have been used in holy anointing oil. In my case, I felt the presence of God, the sweetness and warmth of divine Love surrounding me. The knee problem disappeared completely.

The definition of *oil* in the Glossary of *Science and Health* is "Consecration; charity; gentleness; prayer; heavenly inspiration" (p. 592). The qualities that the oil represents are vital. I'd felt the spiritual conviction that my ability to move did not depend on the state of bones, joints, or muscles. I'd recognized that my movement had its source in God, divine Mind, and that

the substance of the spiritual qualities of oil that I am anointed with never wears out or diminishes.

The influence of Christ is divine law and annuls materialistic theories that would limit us. Governed by this law, we live in health, freedom, and brotherly love. Every day, we can abandon a materialistic view of life and wholeheartedly honor Christ through lives filled with healing.

Living our Christliness has an impact on the quality of our days, our health, our relationships, and our community. More and more we will be able to rejoice with gratitude for being witnesses, to some degree, of the fulfillment of the promise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

Image and Inspiration

Christ will be the beacon that will light our way.

—Enrique S. Turrall, English translation Mary Louise Bringle, *Christian Science Hymnal: Hymns 430–603*, Hymn No. 517, adapt. © CSBD

Photograph by Tessa Parmenter
South Portland, Maine, US

**Christmas wreath on Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse,
South Portland**

My thinking about life shifted to a spiritual basis

Ronald R. Fontana

I was raised in a traditional Christian religion. But while I was in college, I started to realize that it had never really met my needs. In fact, the more I thought about it, the whole notion of a God “up there” somewhere seemed a little silly. I came to the conclusion that God didn’t really exist and that life must be governed by chance or luck. But I kept an open mind—thankfully.

Eventually, it occurred to me that there had been events, such as the Cuban missile crisis and World War II, in which humanity appeared to come to the brink of destruction but was saved. I found this curious. If things were truly random, each possible outcome should be equally likely and, over the long term, should happen with about the same frequency. This, however, didn’t appear to be the case. How could mankind continue to be so lucky? There seemed to be a bias toward good. There were other things as well that didn’t make sense to me—such as kindness and love. What was their basis in a world of randomness or chance? And how could a bias toward good be explained? Could it be because there was a God? Maybe God wasn’t anything like what I had been taught growing up.

I thought about this a lot. I tried coming up with new concepts of what God might really be like and labeled them “non-standard concepts of God.” I concluded that there probably was a higher power of some kind, but one that was quite different from the one I had been taught about.

After a few years of thinking about this, I began to have respiratory problems that I had never had before. When the symptoms didn’t go away and then worsened, I decided I’d better go to the doctor.

The doctor didn’t find any obvious cause but prescribed some medication that he thought might help. After taking it for a time and seeing no improvement, I returned to the doctor. He examined me further, again found nothing, and gave me a new prescription. I still

saw no improvement and returned to the doctor a third time. The pattern was the same—an examination, nothing found, and a new prescription. When I had the latest prescription filled, the druggist called me over and said, “This is really powerful stuff they’re giving you. What’s wrong with you?” I answered that they didn’t seem to know.

Even after taking this new medicine, I saw no improvement. So I stopped taking it and resorted to an antihistamine. While this alleviated the symptoms somewhat, after nearly falling asleep at the wheel a few times on the way home from work, I discontinued that, too.

By this point, I was just existing—going to work, struggling through the day, and coming home—while the symptoms were slowly getting worse. It was becoming more difficult to do chores, and any other physical activities were out of the question. I started to think about my situation in the bigger picture of life and how this might relate to a God.

One warm, sunny day in September, I came home from work and lay on my bed. Through the bedroom window, I could hear the neighborhood children playing and laughing outside. And here I was, miserable and practically immobile. I remember looking at the wall across from me—and then having one of those moments of incredible clarity, as though a big light bulb had been turned on. I realized with great conviction that if there was a God, He would never want His creation to suffer. It would be senseless for Him to want or allow that. The creator could only glory in the beauty and harmony of His work. Wow! It made perfect sense to me. I was blown away by this and couldn’t stop thinking about it during dinner and the rest of that night.

The next day the symptoms seemed to diminish somewhat, and this continued each day until they finally disappeared. Even the cough was gone within a few weeks. I was amazed. I finally had my life back. But for how long? I figuratively held my breath for a few weeks, then pushed that fear to the back of my mind.

I continued to think about what had happened and tried to understand why my health had improved after that revelation about God. The winter passed, and spring

was beginning to arrive. Was that illness seasonal? I was more than a little anxious as the spring and summer progressed, but the symptoms never reappeared. I was elated, but I was always a little concerned.

A few years after this experience, a friend who lived across the country shared with me the book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. When my friend called to ask if I was reading it, I said I was having difficulty getting started. My friend suggested that, instead of reading it from the beginning, I look through it and read whatever caught my interest. This worked really well for me, and I quickly discovered what a profound and interesting work *Science and Health* is.

As I continued to explore the book, one day I found this: “Become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual—neither in nor of matter—and the body will then utter no complaints. If suffering from a belief in sickness, you will find yourself suddenly well” (p. 14).

That was it! Being receptive to a new idea about God had shifted my thinking about life from a material to a spiritual basis, and I had found myself “suddenly well”—I was healed.

I’ve since been able to read *Science and Health* from cover to cover more than once, gaining more insight each time into the nature of God—including His goodness—and His creation. Yes, there definitely is a God, and He doesn’t send illness or suffering. God gives us His love continuously. We don’t have to inform God of our problems or beg Him to fix them. God knows nothing of them. As the Bible puts it, He is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Habakkuk 1:13). As we know more of God, the understanding of His ever-present love melts problems away as the sun melts the fallen snow.

With this understanding of how I was healed, I was no longer concerned about a recurrence. I knew the symptoms *never* would or could return—and this has been true for over thirty-five years. Since that time, I’ve had many wonderful healings through my study and

application of Christian Science, for which I am most grateful.

A new member of the Christian Science Board of Directors

The Christian Science Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Having served on the Christian Science Board of Directors since May of 2017, after a career in law and international business, Rich Evans, CSB, has decided, through much prayer, that it is time to rotate off the Board and return full time to the fruitful work of Christian Science practice and teaching. Rich will continue to teach and hold his association in Arizona. Rich and his wife, Blythe, will live at their residence in Osterville, Massachusetts. All those who have worked with Rich in these recent years can attest to the spiritual gifts he has brought to his work. We are grateful for his devotion to the Cause of Christian Science. His love for the whole human family shines throughout his work, and we know it will continue to shine brightly in the Field.

Rich shares: “I’m deeply blessed by and grateful for the gifts of serving as Manager of the Committees on Publication and on the Christian Science Board of Directors here in Boston. What a privilege it is to witness divine Love continue to reveal the global application and progress of the Science Mary Baker Eddy discovered, founded, and continues to lead through her writings. I am also grateful to have experienced the love for God, Christian Science, and Church expressed by those who work for this Cause here and throughout the world. God, indeed, is good.”

Stepping onto the Board as of January 1, 2025, is Elizabeth (Beth) Schaefer, CSB. Beth grew up and

resides in San Antonio, Texas. She graduated from Principia College with a double major in sociology and Spanish. After college, she worked with troubled youth as director of an emergency shelter for teens in crisis. She also set up and managed several group homes for teens. Later, Beth worked as an environmental educator and naturalist. She went on to work for the United States Forest Service as a wilderness ranger, which included patrolling the backcountry and firefighting stints throughout the western US.

Beth began receiving calls from her Sunday School students and their parents for prayerful help and ultimately became a full-time *Journal*-listed Christian Science practitioner in 1999. She became a Christian Science teacher in 2003. Beth has served as a Christian Science lecturer and Second Reader of The Mother Church and written articles for the Christian Science periodicals, including *The Christian Science Monitor*. Beth and her husband, Lamar Smith, have two grown children and two grandchildren, who fill their lives with joy and delight.

We send our deepest thanks to Rich and look forward to welcoming Beth back to Boston!

The Christian Science Board of Directors

KIDS

Celebrating Christmas . . . before Christmas!

Sentinel staff

It's almost Christmas! You might have cookies to bake or presents to wrap. But then what? How are you going to wait all those days until Christmas morning finally arrives?

Here's a Christmas activity you can do with your brother or sister, or with a friend, parent, or grandparent. This is what you'll need:

- the Bible
- two sheets of paper
- markers and a pen or pencil
- a calendar to follow
- a ruler (optional)

This is what you'll do: Find the Christmas story in the Bible. Part of the story is told in Matthew (1:18—2:23) and another part in Luke (1:26—2:40). As you read the story, use the first sheet of paper to write down some of the people and even animals that are part of the story. Leave space next to each one. As you list characters such as wise men, shepherds, the baby Jesus, Joseph, Mary, and even the donkey Mary rode, think about some of the qualities each of those people or animals expressed. Write them down next to their names.

Your list might look something like this:

- Mary: being a good listener, trusting, loving
- Wise men: brave, persistent, insightful, obedient
- Donkey: steadfast, supportive

Write down as many qualities as you can think of, because you'll need those later.

Once you have your list, get your second piece of paper ready: Look at the calendar. Count how many days there are between now and Christmas (including today). For example, if you're reading this on December 14, there are 12 days between now and Christmas Day.

Now draw the right number of boxes (one box for each day) on the paper. Don't make them too small! They need to be big enough so that you can write or draw inside them. (Two inches by two inches or five centimeters by five centimeters is a good size if you want to measure.)

In the corner of each box, write a little number to show what day it stands for. So, for December 14 you would write a small 14 in the corner of the first box. Put numbers in all the boxes up through 25. Now you're ready to go!

For each day between now and Christmas, pick a person or animal from your list. Draw a picture of it or write its name in that day's box on your calendar. Then write one of that character's qualities that you want to focus on. So you might write: Shepherd. Watchful.

That's your Christmas story role for the day! All that day, you can think about your quality. Try to put it into practice with your friends, at school, at home, or anywhere else you go. Maybe being watchful could mean watching out for your little brother or sister and making sure they're included. Being watchful could also mean noticing how you might help your mom or dad get dinner ready. You'll get lots of opportunities because God gives us good ideas about how we can express His qualities.

We won't ever really know what it felt like to be those shepherds standing on a hillside hearing the angels sing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." But every day between now and December 25, you can be part of today's story of peace, kindness, and love in a way that will make this Christmas season a little more joyful for everyone. Happy celebrating!

HEALINGS

A Christmas gift

Mary Valentine

Christmas is such a joyous time of year. I love decorating (and seeing others' decorations), singing carols, and picking out presents for friends and family.

One December many years ago when I was a full-time teacher, I was particularly busy trying to get ready for Christmas. A few days before the holiday break, I was not feeling well. My throat was sore, and I had trouble swallowing, particularly solid food.

During the break, as my husband and I began a long drive to spend Christmas with his family, it also became difficult for me to swallow liquids, talk, or help with any of the driving. Along the way, we stayed in a hotel overnight, and I asked my husband to call a Christian Science practitioner to pray for me. My husband spoke with the practitioner initially, since I couldn't talk, and

then handed me the telephone to listen to the uplifting thoughts she shared about God, Spirit, and my wholly spiritual nature as His creation.

When we arrived at our destination the next day, as much as I wanted to participate in Christmas festivities, I kept to myself and used the time alone as an opportunity to think about the true meaning of Christmas. As I searched the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, I was reminded that it wasn't about the decorations, caroling, and rushing around to buy presents. Particularly helpful was this excerpt from an essay titled "What Christmas means to me" that she wrote for *The Ladies' Home Journal*: "I love to observe Christmas in quietude, humility, benevolence, charity, letting good will towards man, eloquent silence, prayer, and praise express my conception of Truth's appearing" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 262).

On Christmas Eve my husband and I visited a friend for dinner. Her grown children all lived in distant cities, and she had recently gone through a divorce, so she was alone at Christmas for the first time, and we wanted to support her. I had still not eaten food for several days, but when we entered her home, I encountered the true sense of Christmas: the spirit of divine Love.

As my husband and our friend talked before dinner, I felt all the symptoms I'd been experiencing melt away. I was able to eat a full dinner—dessert and all. Reaching out to and being with our friend showed me what Christmas is all about: feeling and expressing God's healing love. I was learning that "humility, benevolence, charity, . . . good will towards man" could be my gift—to give and receive. I was experiencing for the first time the healing effect of the true, spiritual sense of Christmas.

From that time on, I had total freedom to swallow and talk. I felt so much joy. While I still appreciate the season's festivities, I will never forget the spiritual sense of Christmas.

Mary Valentine

Discolored spot gone

Rhett Rinne

A **number of years** ago, I noticed a small, puffy discoloration on my neck. Having relied on Christian Science for healing in the past, and understanding my true being as God's offspring to be whole and unblemished, I wasn't afraid of it. But I didn't often pray specifically about the spot, and for several years it was simply a minor annoyance, although it continued to grow. I'd notice the spot when looking in a mirror, and when I shaved, I had to be careful not to nick it. Sometimes it felt sore, but most of the time I just ignored it. At one point, my wife, who is not a Christian Scientist, said she thought it might be skin cancer.

Near the end of one summer, my wife looked at my neck in the bright sunshine and said, "You'd better do something about that spot on your neck. It's turned black."

It was clear that I needed to pray more diligently about this. While I had prayed about it occasionally, I decided to devote more effort to treating this problem metaphysically.

I realized that if God is all good and the only substance, then good qualities and flawless substance are all that I can express because I'm made in the image of God, as the Bible says (see Genesis 1:27). The image of God, Spirit, is the only real image, and we are each that entirely spiritual likeness.

In a few weeks my wife looked at my neck and just said, "Good job." The growth was gone, and she was acknowledging that my prayers had been effective in bringing about this healing.

Rhett Rinne

Able to hike again

Nancy New

I am truly blessed to have been raised in Christian Science and seen it lived daily by family, friends, and fellow church members. Physical healings over the years have been abundant and sometimes dramatic. So, I was uncertain why I had been unable to heal a problem with my feet that kept me from hiking and mountain climbing.

One year, while my mother and I were attending the annual meeting of the Christian Science students' association that I belong to, the speaker emphatically affirmed the all-power of God; our identity as children of God, expressing only God's perfection; and the ability of each of us to be a means of healing for ourselves and others. Embracing this fresh presentation of Truth, I felt an inner stirring and realized that I *could* overcome this foot problem.

After the address, our speaker asked each of us to tell her something we wanted to do during the next year. Without hesitation, I responded that I wanted to climb Half Dome again. This mountain in California's Yosemite National Park rises nearly nine thousand feet above sea level (five thousand feet above the valley floor). I had climbed it twice before but had given up hope of ever climbing it again. My mother immediately chimed in, saying that she too would like to achieve this goal, despite the limits commonly believed to apply to older adults. Thus were sown the seeds of a wonderful healing.

The inspiration from that day stayed in our hearts, and we began planning for this trip with prayer. We saw it as a spiritual journey more than a physical feat. Over the months of preparation, we frequently shared inspiration from our daily study of the Bible Lessons from the *Christian Science Quarterly* and from

other metaphysical study and prayer. I prepared a set of readings for us from the Bible, the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, and the *Christian Science Hymnal* focused on “hiking” with God, who is Truth and Love.

These citations explored ways that we express God as His children and the fact that we are subject only to His laws of strength, well-being, and good. Many references, such as the following passage from Proverbs, brought out that when we trust God, He directs our path and keeps us safe, and that we can walk with Him in love and confidence: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; . . . In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. . . . Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble” (3:5, 6, 23). This assurance from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* was also pertinent: “Obedience to Truth gives man power and strength. . . .

“Truth casts out all evils and materialistic methods with the actual spiritual law,—the law which gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, voice to the dumb, feet to the lame” (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 183).

Finally, these lines from the *Hymnal* especially resonated with me: “I walk with Love along the way” (Minnie M. H. Ayers, Hymn No. 139) and “Cared for, watched over, beloved and protected, / Walk thou with courage each step of the way” (P.M., Hymn No. 278). We sang those hymns often, and they gave us confidence that God, Love, would be with us each step of the way.

During the actual hike a few months later, passages such as these kept us tuned in to God. We regularly turned to God, infinite Mind and Truth, in all our activities and decisions, and as a result, the trip was fruitful and fulfilling.

On the last segment of the climb to the top of Half Dome, we had to pull ourselves up an almost vertical slope with just two metal cables for our hands and a few small boards for toeholds. My mom was above me, and I would occasionally let go with one hand to give her additional traction. We weren’t tied together or to anything else.

Suddenly the thought came, “You can’t hold on with one hand!” I knew this was error, the supposed opposite of Truth, speaking, and I silently replied, “God is supporting me.” Then came the suggestion that God was not there: “Look below and you’ll see there is nothing.” It was true that there was a drop of thousands of feet directly below us. But then I saw that there really was *nothing*—nothing that could separate my mom or me from the love of God because God was with us right there on that mountain, giving us peace and safety. I then prayed,

Everlasting arms of Love
Are beneath, around, above;
God it is who bears us on,
His the arm we lean upon.

(John R. Macduff, *Hymnal*, No. 53, adapt. © CSBD).

I then remembered a healing during my college days when lines from this hymn had come to me as I was falling down a stairwell and had provided inspiration that had protected me. Now, on the mountain, I claimed once more the effectiveness of relying on God. I was instantly and completely freed of fear and its limitations. I felt safe and secure, surrounded by Love, and my mother and I were able to finish the hike to the summit with great joy.

The entire trip was harmonious and holy. We hiked over fifty miles to a wide variety of destinations. Both my mom and I were free of the limitations that had seemed so real before we began planning and praying about the trip. This freedom has lasted, as have the benefits of the spiritual journey we took. The healing of my feet was indeed complete, and I have had no further problems with them. Thank you, Father-Mother God!

Nancy New
Oneonta, New York, US

Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?

from the Golden Text

Matthew 19:26

With God all things are possible.

Christ Jesus' definitive assertion reprises Scripture. God asks Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). Jeremiah affirms, "There is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17). And the angel Gabriel assures Jesus' mother, Mary, "With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37, citation 12). Now the Master adds this statement to his teaching about who can be saved (see Matthew 19:23–25).

from the Responsive Reading

Isaiah 45:5, 6, 11–13, 18, 22, 24

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. . . . Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: . . . For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. . . . Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. . . . Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.

Most people of the ancient Near East measured the power of their deity by their country's sovereignty and success in battle. A scholar explains, "The national humiliation that accompanies military defeat inevitably leads to a deep questioning of prevailing religious beliefs." But he adds, "While God acted on behalf of Israel's ancestors in Egypt and continued to be active in the events of Israel's history, the divine purpose was not guided by a nationalistic agenda but by a universal plan of justice. . . . The Hebrew slaves were delivered, not because God loved Hebrews and hated Egyptians, but because God loved justice and hated oppression."

"I am the Lord, and there is none else" unequivocally identifies Yahweh as the one God (see vv. 6, 18, 22 as well). This proclamation was part of a prophecy addressed to Persian king Cyrus, an oracle considered by Israelites to be God's directive to the pagan monarch to deliver them from exile.

"Though thou hast not known me" indicates that Cyrus did not recognize the God of Israel. Yet, around 538 BC, Cyrus indeed liberated the Jews from their decades-long captivity in Babylon, reinstated freedom to worship Yahweh, and ordered the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem (see Ezra, chap. 1).

from Section 1

1 | Hebrews 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Translation

By faith [that is, with an inherent trust and enduring confidence in the power, wisdom and goodness of God] we understand that the worlds (universe, ages) were framed and created [formed, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose] by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

—Amplified® Bible (AMP)

4 | Isaiah 14:27

The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Translation

*The LORD of Heaven's Armies has spoken—
who can change his plans?*

*When his hand is raised,
who can stop him?*

—New Living Translation

Embedded in a victory song, these prophecies offer reassurance to the beleaguered Hebrews in captivity. A commentary notes that Isaiah is demanding strong faith in Yahweh's ability to deliver, and suggests: "Faith is not credulity, wishful thinking or a leap in the dark. Rather, it is a leap into the light, for faith is conviction and action based on evidence."

Disannul is translated from the Hebrew verb *pārar*—to break, frustrate, defeat, or make void. Here it is viewed as foretelling the collapse of both Assyria and Babylonia. It also appears in Nehemiah's account of God's thwarting his enemies' plots (see Nehemiah 4:15) and in the words of Job's friend Eliphaz, "[God] disappointeth [*pārar*] the devices of the crafty" (Job 5:12).

from Section 2

7 | Isaiah 40:11

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Translation

He takes care of his flock like a shepherd.

He gathers the lambs in his arms.

He carries them close to his heart.

He gently leads those that have little ones.

—New International Reader's Version™

2 | Isaiah 40:1, 4, 5

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. . . . Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Translation

"Comfort my people," says our God. "Comfort them!

.

Fill every valley;

level every mountain.

The hills will become a plain,

and the rough country will be made smooth.

Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

and all people will see it.

The LORD himself has promised this."

—Good News Translation

3 | Isaiah 43:21

This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Israel's special relation to God is a distinct theme in the Hebrew Bible. The psalmist writes, for example, "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure" (Psalms 135:4). And Isaiah 43:10 conveys God's declaration "Ye are my witnesses . . . and my servant whom I have chosen."

Christian doctrine expands the designation *chosen* well beyond the Jewish nation, as the author of Ephesians announces: "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (1:4; 2:19).

In antiquity, kings were frequently regarded as shepherds of their people. Similarly, Hebrew Scripture portrays God as the shepherding ruler of Israel (see other instances in Psalms 23:1; 80:1; Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:11–15)—a tender reminder of God’s care.

Shepherds were vital to early economies, protecting sheep from harm, keeping them from wandering or falling behind the flock, and carrying those needing support. Jesus’ parable of the lost sheep provides this word picture: “When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing” (Luke 15:5).

from Section 3

9 | Zechariah 2:10, 13

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. . . . Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord.

Translation

“Shout and rejoice, O beautiful Jerusalem, for I am coming to live among you. . . . Be silent before the LORD, all humanity, . . .”

—New Living Translation

10 | Luke 1:5–7, 11–14, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. . . . And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. . . . And many of

the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. . . . And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. . . . After those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Temple priests were divided into 24 groups called courses, each group serving twice a year for a week at a time. Zacharias was a member of the eighth course (of Abia or Abijah; see I Chronicles 24:10). His participation in burning incense on the altar (see Luke 1:8, 9) was a special honor that normally came just once in a lifetime.

Zacharias’ heavenly visitor identifies himself as Gabriel (known from the scriptural account in Daniel 8:16; 9:21), or “God is my mighty one.” His promise of “joy and gladness” is emphatic, combining a common Greek term for joy (*khara*) with one that signifies exaltation and exuberance (*agalliasis*, repeated in the story of Elisabeth’s babe leaping for joy in her womb; see Luke 1:44, citation 13).

Elisabeth’s “reproach” is childlessness, a condition attributed to women and sometimes thought to illustrate God’s displeasure (see another example in Genesis 30:23). Her five-month retreat from society has no apparent precedent in the Bible. But this seclusion prepares the way for her good news to be revealed to Mary by the angel Gabriel rather than through talk about it (see v. 36, citation 12).

from Section 4

12 | Luke 1:26–38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation

this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

Of the four Gospel writers, only Luke describes Jesus' mother in detail, highlighting her humility, obedience, and devotion (see also vv. 46–55). Luke later names Mary as one of the faithful gathered after the Master's ascension (see Acts 1:14).

Gabriel appears to Mary in Elisabeth's sixth month of pregnancy. His salutation "Thou that art highly favoured" is an extraordinary greeting to a woman, especially one likely in her teens and from a modest village—three characteristics that denoted low social standing. Yet Mary displays courage in questioning the angel messenger and humble composure in embracing her God-given charge.

Christ Jesus' distinction as the Son of God is first mentioned here in Luke's record. Though a few references to God's Son occur in Hebrew Scripture (see, for instance, Psalms 2:7), the title is regularly applied to Jesus in the New Testament (see more examples in Matthew 4:3; 16:16; Mark 1:1, 11; John 20:31; Acts 13:33; Romans 1:4).

Both Elisabeth's and Mary's narratives, according to one source, show "God's initiative of grace and power: of grace in that what is soon to happen will express God's favor toward the world; of power in that God can work through the unable, an old couple and an unmarried girl. Elisabeth [*sic*] and Mary will have sons because God

is able; they will have sons for our sake because God is gracious."

from Section 5

13 | Luke 1:39–47, 49, 50, 56–58

Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . . For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. . . . And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

In the affectionate meeting between Mary and Elisabeth, two pivotal birth stories come together. Both women are the recipients of God's grace, assigned vital roles in His momentous activity on behalf of humanity.

Luke's record makes clear that Elisabeth's knowledge of Mary's pregnancy—and of the identity of Mary's child—is divinely bestowed. Even before returning her cousin's greeting, Elisabeth proclaims a blessing on both mother and child and recognizes Mary as "the mother of my Lord." Elisabeth's meekness is seen as foreshadowing her son's selflessness and humility toward the Savior: "I am not the Christ, but . . . I am sent before him. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:28, 30).

Scholars surmise that the hill country where Elisabeth and Zacharias lived may have been more than three

days' travel from Nazareth—a major trip each way for Mary. (“Juda” signifies the southern region of Palestine, termed Judea by Roman authorities.) Mary’s three-month stay covers the last trimester of Elisabeth’s pregnancy (see Luke 1:24–26). Three months after this, Mary will undertake another long journey—to Bethlehem, where her babe will be born (see Luke, chap. 2).

14 | Zechariah 4:6

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

Translation

“You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit.”

—Good News Translation

from Section 6

15 | Isaiah 32:2

A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Translation

*They will be a place of safety
from stormy winds,
a stream in the desert,
and a rock that gives shade
from the heat of the sun.*

—Contemporary English Version

16 | Luke 2:1, 4–7

It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . . And

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke places Jesus’ birth in the context of world events, contrasting the arrival of the promised Messiah with the domination of Roman emperor Augustus over Palestine.

While imperial taxation usually happened at citizens’ areas of residence, the procedure may have been altered to account for Jewish tribal affiliations (sending Israelites to the sites of their paternal ancestors’ homes). In the midst of this political process—one that not only regulated monies owed but reminded Jews of Caesar’s power—Jesus’ royal status is evident. He is “of the house and lineage of David,” with the titles Savior and Lord (see v. 11), generally bestowed solely on Roman rulers.

16 | Luke 2:8–11

There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Although shepherds were deemed rough and unclean, respected Hebrew leaders Moses and David had been shepherds. Luke’s record of this angelic revelation (the only literal reference to shepherds in the New Testament) is viewed as a reminder that the Messiah was predicted to be a descendant of David who would bring salvation to everyone, even those considered sinners and outcasts.

Sheep guarded outside Bethlehem are assumed to have been sacrificial animals. That they were in the field instead of in pens may point to a period of warm weather, but the exact date of Jesus' birth isn't known. (Constantine, Christian emperor of Rome in the fourth century AD, is believed by some to have chosen December 25 as an alternative celebration to a popular pagan feast.)

A commentator calls glory “the true apprehension of God or things”—and continues, “The glory of God must mean His unchanging essence . . . ; the glory of created things including man is what they are meant by God to be. . . .”

Read a related article, “The Christmas story and the healer” by Rebecca Odegaard, at cssentinel.com/christmas-story-healer

Resources cited in this issue

RR: Mays, James Luther, et al., eds. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Vol. 20, *Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1982–.

Cit. 4: Wiseman, Donald John, et al., eds. *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*. Vol. 18, *Isaiah*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1964–.

Cit. 12: Mays, James Luther, et al., eds. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Vol. 29, *Luke*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1982–.

Cit. 16: Zodhiates, Spiros. *The Complete Word Study New Testament: King James Version*. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992.

COPYRIGHT

Scriptural quotations marked Amplified® Bible (AMP) are taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. lockman.org

Scriptural quotations marked Good News Translation are taken from the Good News Translation in Today's

English Version—Second Edition, copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked New Living Translation are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scriptural quotations marked New International Reader's Version™ are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version™, NIrV™. Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptural quotations marked Contemporary English Version are taken from the Contemporary English Version, copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Christian Science

from the Golden Text

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Not unlike those who believe in astrology today, many people at this period assumed their lives to be under the capricious control of the stars. Here the author debunks this theory, affirming God as the sole and immutable power over all creation.

from the Responsive Reading

Isaiah 9:6, 7

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

In this text, Isaiah foretells the fulfillment of divine promises. Both II Samuel 7:8–16 and Psalms 89:19–29, for instance, convey God’s pledge to David that his kingdom would last forever. In the New Testament, Luke 1:31–33 declares Christ Jesus’ advent to be the consummation of this prophecy.

Zeal is translated from the Hebrew noun *qin’â*. Applied to human beings, it is usually rendered *jealousy* or *envy* (see examples in Proverbs 6:34; 27:4). Applied to God, as in this passage, it implies commitment, determination, and—to some scholars—great love.

Luke 2:14, 25, 27–32

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. . . . And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. . . . And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Simeon’s expectant hope enables him to recognize the prophesied Messiah in the infant Jesus. His request to “depart in peace” expresses willingness for his earthly life to end, now that he has witnessed this blessed arrival. And he is the first person in the New Testament to assert that the Savior is to come not only to the Hebrew nation but to Gentiles as well.

Commentaries note that some Jews looked for a kind of God-appointed firebrand in their Messiah, someone who would bring about political liberation. Others, one source points out, “had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with banners; they believed in a life of constant prayer and quiet watchfulness. . . . Simeon was like that; in prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would comfort his people.”

from Section 1

1 | Isaiah 7:14

The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Almost unparalleled (with the possible exception of Psalms) in its importance to New Testament writers, the book of Isaiah is quoted dozens of times in the Gospels, Paul’s letters, and the book of Revelation. Isaiah’s oracle in this verse is central to Matthew’s account of Jesus’ birth (see Matthew 1:23).

The Hebrew noun rendered *virgin* (*‘almâ*) means young woman, especially one of marriageable age. It also appears in Genesis 24:43 to describe Isaac’s future bride, Rebekah. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the word used specifically signifies a virgin.

2 | Matthew 2:1, 2, 9–14

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when

they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Magos is the Greek term translated *wise men*. Often denoting sorcerers and magicians, in this text it represents respected philosophers, teachers, or priests. Their search for the “King of the Jews” rather than “our king” suggests that they are Gentiles. And although Western Christian tradition cites three kings named Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar, the number and names of the Magi are not noted in Scripture (nor are they identified as kings).

In antiquity, frankincense and myrrh were valued as highly as gold. Derived from the resin of trees found almost exclusively in Arabia and Northeast Africa, these costly substances—sometimes in such demand as to fill entire boatloads—were used in perfume, cosmetics, incense, salves, and burial treatments for thousands of years. Frankincense was prized in Temple worship; myrrh was a main ingredient of skincare products, medicines, and anointing oils.

The actual value of the Magi’s gifts can’t be calculated, but scholars agree that their quality and worth attested to Jesus’ Messiahship—and likely provided for the family’s sojourn in Egypt (see vv. 13–15).

3 | I John 1:3, 4

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Translation

What we have seen and [ourselves] heard, we are also telling you, so that you too may realize and enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us. And [this] fellowship that we have [which is a distinguishing mark of Christians] is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah). And we are now writing these things to you so that our joy [in seeing you included] may be full [and your joy may be complete].

—Amplified[®] Bible (AMPC)

from Section 2

4 | I John 5:1, 20

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: . . . And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.

Translation

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. . . . We also know that the Son of God has come. He has given us understanding. So we can know the God who is true. And we belong to the true God by belonging to his Son, Jesus Christ.

—New International Reader’s Version[™]

5 | John 4:7, 9–11, 13, 14, 19, 25, 26

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. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? . . . Jesus answered and said

unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but 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. . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. . . . I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Water from rivers, springs, and rainfall—fresh or “living” water that constantly replenishes itself—was scarce in Judea. Wells and cisterns were necessary alternatives, but standing water could become bitter and brackish. For this reason, “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” must have been inconceivable to this woman. But Jesus’ imagery introduces the life-giving knowledge of God in Christ.

Like Jews, Samaritans were waiting for the great prophet that Moses had promised (see Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus’ answer convinces the woman that he is the promised Messiah (see John 4:29).

8 | John 15:26

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

Translation

The helper whom I will send to you from the Father will come. This helper, the Spirit of Truth who comes from the Father, will declare the truth about me.

—GOD’S WORD[®] Translation

During his final talk with his disciples before the crucifixion, the Master concludes a warning about the world’s hatred of truth (see vv. 18–25) with words of tender reassurance. The Comforter (see 14:16–18, 26; 16:7 as well) is to be God’s loving provision for the faithful throughout the ensuing years and centuries.

Paraklētos, the Greek term rendered *Comforter*, is also translated *Advocate*, *Counselor*, and *Helper* in modern versions. Together with the word *testify*

(Greek, *martyreō*), it indicates legal representation of a defendant in court—here referring to the defending role of the Holy Spirit. (Similarly, Romans 8:27, 34 mentions the intercessory activity of the Spirit and Christ.) For Jesus’ followers, the Comforter guarantees spiritual guidance and protection.

from Section 3

11 | Mark 13:7, 8

When ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles.

Visions and predictions of disaster were common to Hebrew prophecy (see, for instance, Isaiah 13:6–13; Jeremiah 6:22–25; 24:9, 10), so Jesus’ descriptions would have been familiar to his listeners. Just before this passage, Jesus has foretold the fall of the Temple. When four of his disciples ask him when this will happen (see vv. 1–4), his response is candid—widespread troubles are inevitable. But believers are to remain confident and undisturbed.

A commentator views the Master’s words as a charge to Christians to fully engage in their Christly mission instead of speculating about end-times. He suggests, “If all the attention and concern which in Christian history have been given to *last* things had only been given to *first* things, the power of Christianity in the world and its service to the world would have been enormously increased.”

12 | John 14:1, 12, 18, 26, 27

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. . . . The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall

teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

Translation

“Don’t be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me. . . . I tell you for certain that if you have faith in me, you will do the same things that I am doing. You will do even greater things, now that I am going back to the Father. . . . I won’t leave you like orphans. I will come back to you. . . . the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you. I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give.”

—Contemporary English Version

With this counsel, Jesus prepares his closest friends for his imminent passion events. *Peace* here is not simply the customary Jewish word of greeting and farewell, nor is it the assurance of an end to conflict. Angels’ announcement of the Savior’s birth included the promise of peace (see Luke 2:8–14); now it is presented as a spiritual bequest. One source explains, “The term speaks, in effect, of the salvation that Christ’s redemptive work will achieve for his disciples—total well-being and inner rest of spirit, in fellowship with God.”

13 | I John 4:14

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Translation

And [besides] we ourselves have seen (have deliberately and steadfastly contemplated) and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son [as the] Savior of the world.

—Amplified[®] Bible (AMPC)

from Section 4

14 | Psalms 67:1, 2

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Translation

*God, have mercy on us and bless us.
Show your kindness to us.
Then the world will learn your ways.
All nations will learn that you can save.*

—International Children’s Bible[®]

from Section 5

18 | Acts 10:34, 35

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Translation

Peter then said: Now I am certain that God treats all people alike. God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right, no matter what nation they come from.

—Contemporary English Version

19 | Acts 11:1, 4, 5, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18

The apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. . . . Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: . . . And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man’s house: . . . And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. . . . Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was

I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

At this time, Peter has recently returned from visiting Cornelius, a Roman centurion who has become a believer. The apostle faces criticism from fellow Christians of Jewish heritage (see vv. 2, 3) because he violated Hebrew laws about separation from “unclean” Gentiles. Recounting the role of the Holy Spirit in the entire episode, Peter transforms their objections into praise.

20 | Ephesians 4:7

Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Translation

... he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.

—New Living Translation

from Section 6

21 | Ephesians 2:4, 6–8

God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ... hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Translation

God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ... For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

—New Living Translation

God's grace is a key theme from earliest Christian teaching. While Jewish doctrine generally held that redemption and salvation must be earned, adherents of Christ perceived them to be freely available through God's love.

To be seated “in heavenly places” is understood to signify a close relationship to God and His Christ. “The intent here,” a scholar reflects, “is to underscore the life believers now have with Christ, and with that life come privilege, honor, security, and responsibility.” He adds, “The phrase points to the heavenly—i.e., the spiritual—reality of God and his work in Christ.”

22 | I Peter 4:10

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Translation

Each of you received a spiritual gift. God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God's gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other.

—International Children's Bible[®]

Read a related editorial, “A gift worth wrapping,” at jsh.christianscience.com/a-gift-worth-wrapping

Resources cited in this issue

RR: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

Cit. II: Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 7, *New Testament Articles, Matthew, Mark*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

Cit. 12: Barker, Kenneth, et al., eds. *The NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Cit. 21: Wilkins, Michael J. *NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text . . . to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

COPYRIGHT

Scriptural quotations marked Amplified® Bible (AMPC) are taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMPC), Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. lockman.org

Scriptural quotations marked GOD'S WORD® Translation are taken from GOD'S WORD®. © 1995, 2003, 2013, 2014, 2019, 2020 by God's Word to the Nations Mission Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked Contemporary English Version are taken from the Contemporary English Version, copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked International Children's Bible® are taken from the International Children's Bible®. Copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scriptural quotations marked New Living Translation are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House

Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

LETTERS & CONVERSATIONS

Letters & Conversations

Linda Noren, Kim C. Korinek, Jobie Townshend-Zellner

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

This poem was just what I needed. I appreciate all the articles and podcasts that have addressed politics and gaining a sense of peace, and I reread them when I feel disturbed.

Linda Noren, Petaluma, California, US

> **Name Withheld, “See the real identity behind the mask,” cssentinel.com, October 24, 2024**

Thank you for this helpful, hopeful, and joyous article. It brings out a universal Principle applicable to all of our relationships with one another—work, family, church, etc.

Kim C. Korinek, St. Paul, Minnesota, US

> John Qualtrough, “Seeking spiritual wisdom over human advice,” *Sentinel*, October 21, 2024

I read this article after mailing my ballot, and then prayed for peace about our election in the US. This idea came from *Science and Health*: “Man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine Truth and Love” (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 106). Then this new idea brought peace: Because it’s from God, man’s self-government never began and so can never end—not even in an election cycle!

Jobie Townshend-Zellner, San Diego, California, US

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL

PUBLISHED BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY

EDITOR: ETHEL A. BAKER

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: TONY LOBL, LARISSA SNOREK, LISA RENNIE SYTSMA

MANAGING EDITOR: SUSAN STARK

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT: GRAHAM THATCHER; KARINA BUMATAY

CONTENT & YOUTH: JENNY SAWYER

COPY EDITOR: CAROL NIEDERBRACH

BIBLE LENS: CHERYL RANSON

STAFF EDITORS: NANCY HUMPHREY CASE, SUSAN KERR, NANCY MULLEN, TESSA PARMENTER, CHERYL RANSON, ROYA SABRI, HEIDI KLEINSMITH SALTER, JULIA SCHUCK, JENNY SINATRA, SUZANNE SMEDLEY, LIZ BUTTERFIELD WALLINGFORD

AUDIO PRODUCTION: AMY RICHMOND; CARLOS A. MACHADO, AMANDA KAMAU, NATASHA K. TELSCHOW

PRINT & WEB PRODUCTION: GILLIAN A. LITCHFIELD, GRETCHEN NEWBY, BRENDUNT SCOTT

DESIGN: AARON CRANFORD

CONTACT US

JSH.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/ CONTACT-US

ARTICLE & TESTIMONY SUBMISSIONS:

JSH.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/SUBMIT OR
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL, SUBMISSIONS,
210 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. P03-10
BOSTON, MA 02115 USA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: SENTINEL@CSPS.COM

CONTACT US

- ON THE WEB: JSH-ONLINE.COM
- MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS & WRITING GUIDE REQUESTS: JSHWRITE@CSPS.COM
- SINGLE COPIES: THE *SENTINEL* IS SOLD AT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE READING ROOMS WORLDWIDE. TO FIND A READING ROOM VISIT [HTTP://JOURNAL.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/DIRECTORY](http://JOURNAL.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/DIRECTORY) OR USE THE DIRECTORY IN THE BACK OF THE *JOURNAL*. YOU CAN ALSO CHECK YOUR LOCAL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY UNDER "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE."
- SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RENEWALS: TO SUBSCRIBE OR RENEW A JSH-ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION VISIT JSH-ONLINE.COM. FOR PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS GO TO CSSUBSCRIBERS.COM OR CALL THE CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT AT 888-424-2535 WEEKDAYS BETWEEN 9 A.M. AND 5 P.M. EASTERN TIME.

SENTINEL DIGITAL TEXT EDITION

JSH MAGAZINE PROMOTIONAL AND REPRINT INFO AND NOTICES FOR DIGITAL TEXT EDITION (AKA B&W, PRINTER-FRIENDLY VERSION; FOR AFRICA, EPUB, MOBI, TEXT-ONLY PDF)
LAST EDITED 3/1/2012

MAGAZINE PROMOTIONAL AND REPRINT INFORMATION:

EXCEPT FOR ARTICLES LABELLED "ITEMS OF INTEREST," ANY ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE MAY BE REPRODUCED FOR SHARING (UP TO 25 COPIES BY INDIVIDUALS AND UP TO 100 COPIES BY READING ROOMS, BRANCH CHURCHES, CS CARE FACILITIES, AND THE LIKE) OR MAY BE ENLARGED ON PAPER BY READING ROOMS (E.G., FOR WINDOW DISPLAYS, EVENT BOOTHS, ETC.) TO PROMOTE THIS MAGAZINE. ALL CREDITS MUST BE PRESERVED. COPIES THAT INCLUDE THE COVER MUST ALSO INCLUDE THE TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE WITH THE COVER CREDITS. FOR ALL OTHER USES, INCLUDING INTERNET, OR COPIES IN EXCESS OF THE NUMBERS SPECIFIED ABOVE, PLEASE E-MAIL: COPYRIGHT@CSPS.COM OR WRITE TO: PERMISSIONS, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY, 210 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, P03-20, BOSTON, MA USA 02115.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL - DIGITAL TEXT EDITION. THIS IS A DIGITAL TEXT VERSION OF THE *SENTINEL* FROM WWW.JSH-ONLINE.COM, PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY, 210 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, P02-25, BOSTON, MA 02115 USA, AN ACTIVITY OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, IN BOSTON, MA. FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS DIGITAL TEXT EDITION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE OR AT [HTTP://JSH.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/CONTACT-US](http://JSH.CHRISTIANSIENCE.COM/CONTACT-US).

THE DESIGN OF THE CROSS AND CROWN SEAL IS A TRADEMARK OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND IS USED BY PERMISSION. *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL* IS A TRADEMARK OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY. BOTH TRADEMARKS ARE REGISTERED IN THE UNITED STATES, THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

© 2024 THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.