



# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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## EDITORIAL

- 2 **What makes us new?**  
*Jenny Sawyer*
- 3 **God, the great Conductor**  
*Trevor Yates*
- 4 **Calming troubled political waters**  
*Michael Mooslin*
- 6 **New Editor at *The Christian Science Monitor***  
*The Christian Science Board of Directors*
- 7 **Healings confirmed my intuitions about health**  
*Steep Weiss*

## KIDS

- 8 **Jumping for joy**  
*Oliver*

## HEALINGS

- 9 **Painful elbow condition overcome**  
*John Marshall*
- 10 **Purity of thought brings physical healing**  
*Name Withheld*
- 10 **No more bladder infections**  
*Sue Boyd Oakes*
- 11 **A star within**  
*Béatrice Labarthe*

## BIBLE LENS

- 12 **God the Preserver of Man**

## LETTERS & CONVERSATIONS

- 18 **Letters & Conversations**  
*Anne Melville, Grace S. Duffy*

## What makes us new?

Jenny Sawyer

**It's that time** of year when a frequent refrain is that everyone is “over it.” They're ready for a fresh start, a new leaf.

“I'm tired of everyone and everything,” read a post on social media. “Bring on the new year.”

It raises a thought-provoking question. What makes us new? The inexorable march of time? Our efforts to reinvent ourselves when the calendar tells us to?

A hymn in the *Christian Science Hymnal* flips the script when it says, “O Life that maketh all things new” (Samuel Longfellow, No. 218), indicating that the ceaselessness of divine Life, a Bible-based name for God, is the ever-present renewing power. It restores, regenerates, and brings freshness to our lives—no matter the season.

More than anyone else, Christ Jesus proved this power of God, Life, to renew and redeem. In his presence, those who'd done wrong found they could do differently—and feel a cleansing, life-restoring sense of being forgiven. Those whose bodies were broken or diseased found healing—and a life-affirming freedom.

And yet, even more foundational than the healings was the entirely new view of Life that Jesus revealed to humanity. He called it the kingdom of heaven, and everywhere he went, he greeted people with the news that this kingdom is already here—“at hand” (Matthew 4:17). Just think of the hope, the joyful feeling of newness, that must have bubbled up in his listeners' hearts when they heard these words. The wait was over. Heaven was here! Even the smallest acknowledgment of this spiritual reality must have set their lives on a brand-new trajectory. God was no longer far off and abstract, but the living Love that they could experience today.

And so, too, it is for us. We are promised that “of his kingdom there shall be no end,” as the angel says to Jesus' mother, Mary (Luke 1:33). While it may seem as though our lives are wrapped up in timelines, limitations, and all the other traps and trappings of mortality, the opposite is true. Divine Life is actually our life. We are in it and of it. We aren't mortals destined to an early peak and then inevitable decline, but Life's own expression—wholly spiritual, and therefore perpetually new. It's the Christ that makes this evident to us and compels us to live more fully from this basis.

The Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, identified Christ not as the man Jesus, but as “his divine nature, the godliness which animated him” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 26). This animating power of Life is just as present now, and just as actively makes this heavenly kingdom apparent to us. And because this is God's power, not something self-generated, we can depend on it to continually bless us with a renewed sense of things—sometimes even before we ask.

That was the case for me last December when I was feeling burdened and run down during the last gray weeks of the year. One afternoon while I was out running errands, I felt impelled to take a moment to do a favor for a stranger. Honestly, it didn't seem like a big deal, yet with that act I felt what I can only describe as a tide of newness rise up and wash over me. Gone were the end-of-year blahs. I felt utterly restored—and that feeling carried me into the New Year.

What happened? I think Mrs. Eddy explained it best when she wrote, “. . . Love alone is Life” (*Poems*, p. 7). As I experienced that day, one of the ways Life makes us new is through love—through not only feeling the presence of divine Love but also living love ourselves.

Can we think of anything more valuable—or more transformative—for the world? To know that we not only reside in God's kingdom now but that we can live and love the way citizens of this kingdom do? It's this deeply Christian love that brings hope to the world-weary, healing to the heavy-hearted, and the promise of progress to the fearful and dispirited who are wondering if there's even a way forward.

Newness, it turns out, is guaranteed. And isn't that what we all want—to know that we can be new not just once a year but even moment by moment? Our prayers can reassure us that since we are actually Life's expression, God's spiritual likeness, newness is indeed innate to our lives—because it is Life itself that makes us, everyone, and all things new, no matter the need or the season. We can count on it.

**Jenny Sawyer**, Managing Editor,  
Youth Content and Content Development

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## God, the great Conductor

*When we see that God is center stage—always present and active—we become more attuned to the good He is always giving us.*

*Trevor Yates*

**Many of us have**, at one point or another, imitated a musical conductor. Who hasn't waved their arms through the air directing an imaginary orchestra at least once? But great conducting is more than dramatic arm-waving. The conductor has a deep knowledge of the full scope of the musical composition. And the orchestra members' trust in this musical leader enables them to follow him or her and play music together.

Do we sometimes think we don't need to be led? I've come to appreciate the importance of being led—and following. Any challenge we might have with this may have a lot to do with who or what we see as leading us. An orchestra would not allow someone with no musical knowledge to lead them. Similarly, we might not trust someone to guide us unless we're confident in their ability to do so.

The reasons for allowing God to “conduct” our lives and following His guidance are compelling. The psalmist writes: “Lord, you have examined me. You know me. . . . You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways. . . . That kind of knowledge is too much for me; it's so high above

me that I can't reach it” (Psalms 139:1, 3, 6, Common English Bible).

Allowing God, rather than our own limited understanding, or even another person, to lead us has profound beneficial effects. Mary Baker Eddy writes in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, “When man is governed by God, the ever-present Mind who understands all things, man knows that with God all things are possible” (p. 180). The one Mind, God, knows that all good is possible, so man, Mind's expression, must know this, too. We need look no further than the Bible for countless examples of those who did trust God and greatly benefited themselves and others by doing so.

For instance, Joseph rose to prominence in the house of an Egyptian official who saw that “the Lord was with him” (Genesis 39:3). Joseph eventually became second-in-command of Egypt and led the region wisely through seven years of abundance and seven years of famine—and beyond. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, not by being a naturally gifted speaker and leader, but by relying on God to show him how to deal with Pharaoh and what to do as he led his people on their forty-year trek to the Promised Land. Later, Ruth was guided by God to follow her mother-in-law, Naomi, to a new land, where Ruth ultimately became the great grandmother of King David and was recognized in the New Testament as part of the lineage of Jesus, the Messiah (see Matthew 1:5–16).

So why do we think we can go it alone and let God lead us only if we get into a jam? How well would that approach work in an orchestra? It would mean nothing but discord. Could it be that we think of ourselves as soloists when we're actually part of God's grand orchestra? If we think we're playing alone, we're missing the opportunity to be in concert with others.

One reason we may be reluctant to let God lead is that we have a false sense that we ourselves, rather than Mind or Principle (synonyms for God) are in charge of our day and our life. When we think we're playing solo, it's easy to believe that others' needs, goals, or interests are competing with ours. This false sense is based on a belief in limitation—too little time or too few

opportunities, resources, etc. Seeing others as obstacles rather than collaborators puts us at risk of being out of harmony with our neighbors.

I live in New York City. With eight million neighbors, it can look as if each person is scurrying around like an ant on an anthill. But an entomologist will say that ants don't run about willy-nilly; each has important work to do that contributes to the well-being of the whole. Recently, I was riding my skateboard through the city and turned onto a side street. As I rounded the corner, a mother with her toddler stepped into the street in the crosswalk. They had the crosswalk light, so skateboards, bicycles, and vehicles did not have the right of way. But I did not stop and, although able to avoid the mom and tot, realized afterward that I was being selfish and not playing in harmony with others—and most of all, not listening to God.

Being a good neighbor, like being a musician in an orchestra, requires practicing daily and bringing our best to perform in a way that contributes to the greater good. This requires humility, which is a spiritual, God-given quality and was illustrated in the life and teachings of Christ Jesus.

As I pray about being a good neighbor among so many, I have to remind myself that God has one or more important parts for each of us to play throughout our day. Orchestra members express humility in respecting their fellow musicians by not playing at a volume or pace that is at odds with them. If one orchestra member tries to have a solo moment at the wrong time, it throws off the entire orchestra. Similarly, we're all accountable for helping to make our neighborhoods and nations harmonious places to be, even as we express our own unique individuality.

*Science and Health* states, "To develop the full might of this Science, the discords of corporeal sense must yield to the harmony of spiritual sense, even as the science of music corrects false tones and gives sweet concord to sound" (p. viii). Playing in harmony with one another comes more easily when we silence a material sense of things and listen with our divine sense, with spiritual intuition, for God's direction. God, our great conductor,

helps us be our best with those around us when we genuinely listen.

The Bible's book of Proverbs says of trusting God, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (3:6). When we see that God is center stage—always present and active—we learn of His love and become more attuned to the good He is always giving us. He leaves no one out. In doing this, we become more patient, calm, and grateful and a better neighbor, coworker, church member, and family member.

Focusing on God throughout our day keeps us from becoming overly involved in what we think is best for ourselves. This also helps us refrain from obsessing about what others think or are doing. Musicians must be aware of others but not distracted by what other instruments are playing. And each has their own lessons to learn. Looking to the great conductor to keep tempo helps us all perform together successfully.

*Science and Health* asserts, "Harmony in man is as real and immortal as in music" (p. 276). Comporting ourselves with humility and listening for God's guidance enables us to respect the part we each play and leads to greater harmony . . . and that sounds pretty good.

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## Calming troubled political waters

*Christian Science does not preach any sort of human approach to policymaking but a spiritual righteousness that blesses all.*

*Michael Mooslin*

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**I once overheard** a fellow church member say of one main party's candidate, "I don't know how anyone can be a Christian Scientist and support them." It wasn't long after that another church friend questioned how a person could be a Christian Scientist and support the

other main party's candidate. Political ideology can lead us to the conclusion that anyone who disagrees with the ideology we favor is wrong—that only our preferred ideology is correct. Of course, this is intellectually impossible. Political viewpoints belonging to various parties include ideas that are intelligent, useful, and important.

So what causes us to take it personally when we disagree with other's ideas or makes us attempt to influence another to think the way we do—and if they don't, to consider them an enemy or, at least, less of a friend? What causes family members to separate themselves socially from each other based on these differences?

Human opinions find their source in external influences such as social media and left/right-focused journalism, as opposed to spiritual inspiration, which is strictly a divine influence. Aren't extremes of political opinions really based on ignorance of the nature of God as all-good and all-powerful, and of God as providing all good to His loved, spiritual sons and daughters? This ignorance can cause us to fear factors that seem to be out of control. For instance, fears about not having enough money to sustain one's family—or conversely about losing what one already has—may be driving stormy emotions about a candidate's stance regarding the economy. But through Christian Science we can gain a higher view. We can depend on a loving God as being in charge of our good, our health and safety, and our freedom, and prove that understanding prayer can bring that good into our experience. Then we won't be afraid or angry about someone taking office whom we didn't vote for.

Much discourse on the internet promotes anger and fear through algorithms that lead many users to receive and share a constant diet of extreme division-mongering. That reinforces one-sided or even completely false opinions; whereas, spiritually inspired thought comes directly from our divine source, God, and promotes unity of spirit and progress.

Of course, this divisiveness is nothing new. We need only look to the Bible history of the Sadducees and the Pharisees. According to Britannica.com, "The Sadducees and Pharisees were in constant conflict with

each other. The Pharisees emerged as a party of laymen and scribes in contradistinction to the Sadducees—i.e., the party of the high priesthood that had traditionally provided the sole leadership of the Jewish people." Christ Jesus provided a higher and more thoughtful model, turning mortals to God as the source of solutions in all human affairs and rebuking whatever error seems present.

Today, in like manner, Christian Science comes to the rescue of our current political discourse. It does not preach a conservative, a liberal, or any sort of human approach to policymaking, but a spiritual righteousness that blesses all. It lifts us from a material rebuke of each other to a spiritual interpretation of the word *rebuke*—the kind Jesus employed when he rebuked the winds and the waves on a violent lake. He would not be brought down to the disciples' fear of being in a storm. Instead he lifted them to a holy calm by rebuking the raging of material-mindedness. "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26).

Referring to "a rest in Christ, a peace in Love," Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes, "The thought of it stills complaint; the heaving surf of life's troubled sea foams itself away, and underneath is a deep-settled calm" (*Message to The Mother Church for 1902*, p. 19).

Webster defines *rebuke* as follows: "To check or restrain; to calm; to heal." When Jesus rebuked someone, he demanded through God's authority that something that was erroneous within them cease and desist. Mrs. Eddy counsels, "I recommend that Scientists draw no lines whatever between one person and another, but think, speak, teach, and write the truth of Christian Science without reference to right or wrong personality in this field of labor. . . .

"To this small effort let us add one more privilege—namely, silence whenever it can substitute censure. . . .

". . . let your opponents alone, and use no influence to prevent their legitimate action from their own standpoint of experience, knowing, as you should, that God will well regenerate and separate wisely and

finally; whereas you may err in effort, and lose your fruition" (*No and Yes*, pp. 7—9).

With regard to politics and journalism, *The Christian Science Monitor* brings light, not heat, to political situations. It doesn't tell the reader what to think but allows readers to think for themselves and spotlights principle over personality. It does not assume a right or left position, but a higher view where all can come together in civil discourse and mutual respect. It calms the troubled sea.

Lines from a hymn best describes how the political waters can be calmed:

Every prayer to Him is answered,  
Prayer confiding in His will;  
Blessedness and joy are near thee,  
Hear His gentle Peace, be still.  
Hear His voice above the tempest:  
I have not forsaken thee;  
In My hand thy name is graven,  
I will save both thine and thee.

(From Swedish of Boëthius and Wallin, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 76, adapt. © CSBD.)

In other words, God is saying, "I am in control. I, not a political party or leader, will save you."

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## New Editor at *The Christian Science Monitor*

*The Christian Science Board of Directors*

**The Editor of *The Christian Science Monitor***, Mark Sappenfield, will be stepping back from his role as Editor, having decided to extend his stay in Berlin, Germany, where he and his family have been living since August 2023. He will continue to work for the *Monitor* in a senior role.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Christa Case Bryant as the next Editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*. Christa brings twenty years of experience as an international bureau chief, political reporter, and editor to her new post and, most important, a deep understanding of the *Monitor's* mission. Christa will take the reins from Mark in the early part of next year.

We are very grateful for Mark's editorial direction of the *Monitor* over the past eight years and his continuing commitment to the *Monitor's* work. Mark has reported from the Pentagon to Afghanistan, covering seven Olympic Games and multiple NASA missions. As Editor, he has helped to develop and produce the *Monitor's* "values projects," including the Respect Project, Finding Resilience, and Rebuilding Trust. He has worked assiduously in pursuit of a deeper journalism that has been the *Monitor's* hallmark, and to support and develop staff at all stages of their careers.

Christa's love of the *Monitor* and its high standards for journalism is grounded in a broad portfolio of assignments from helping to guide the CSMonitor.com website during the *Monitor's* transition to a web-first publication to Jerusalem bureau chief to senior congressional correspondent. While covering Congress, Christa won two major awards for political journalism: the National Press Foundation's Dirksen Award for Distinguished Reporting of Congress in 2022 and the 2023 Sigma Delta Chi award for Washington Correspondence. She is also an alumna of the Nieman Fellowship for Journalism at Harvard University. Christa will be the 17th Editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*.

We are extremely grateful to Mark and Christa for their dedication to Christian Science and for their many years of service to the *Monitor*. We thank Mark for his work as Editor, and we will welcome Christa in the coming months as the new Editor.

**The Christian Science Board of Directors**

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# Healings confirmed my intuitions about health

Steep Weiss

**During my last** year of high school, I dislocated my shoulder while surfing with friends. When the painful shoulder was put back in place, the doctor advised me that it could be prone to repeated dislocation unless I returned for surgery.

This prediction went against how I thought of myself—as a happy-go-lucky kid with few worries. Convinced that the shoulder would heal naturally, I didn't go back for the surgery.

Because of my carefree view of myself and the world, I hadn't applied myself much in high school—despite the values my family tried to instill in me—and wasn't doing well academically. It was doubtful that I could get the kind of college education my parents envisioned for me. Fortunately, I wasn't into drinking, smoking, or recreational drugs and had begun to separate myself from my friends who were. With few friends remaining, I just tried to study harder and exercise more.

Around this time, my vision became blurry, and I was prescribed glasses that I assumed I would just use temporarily. However, I was informed that I would have to get increasingly stronger lenses, as my vision was expected to grow worse. This pronouncement, too, went against who I felt I was. I thought I should be able to outgrow any such shortcomings, so I did not use the glasses.

I had long since stopped attending church with my family, but as I tried to make sense of this and other troubling changes I was beginning to experience, the Bible in my bedroom provided comforting verses and supported some of my intuitions.

After high school, my parents encouraged me to apply for college, and I eventually found a university in a distant state that would take me. I left my eyeglasses at home and did not miss them, but my mother sent them

to me. I promptly dropped them into a wastebasket in objection to the notion that I would have to depend on them.

As a freshman away from home, I found my studies difficult. I was also searching everywhere for meaning and purpose in life and occasionally found glimmers of hope and insight in the Bible. Wanting to understand the Bible better, I often attended meetings of a nondenominational Christian fellowship group on campus, but I wasn't finding satisfying answers to my questions.

Struggling academically and mentally, I lost a lot of weight. Eventually I became so incoherent that the minister I was seeing thought it best to take me to the local hospital for treatment. He called my father, who immediately came to help me.

My dad was a United States Navy pilot during World War II, and prayer had helped him survive brutal treatment as a prisoner of war and had been important in his relatively quick return to duty. He once told me that he'd met a Christian Scientist in the Navy and been impressed with the healings this friend had told him about. Dad still had a pocket-sized edition of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that a Navy chaplain had given him.

Though my parents had raised our family in another Christian faith, Dad now thought that Christian Science might be helpful to me. Before coming to the hospital, he stopped at a local Christian Science Reading Room and asked if there was a Christian Scientist who could accompany him to visit me. He was put in touch with a church member, who agreed to come.

Dad gave me his copy of *Science and Health* and assured me that all was well. Almost immediately I felt enveloped in love and mentally well. I readily recognized that Christian Science was what I had been searching for.

My dad got me released from the hospital early the next day, and I soon returned to classes, invigorated with a whole new outlook. I devoured *Science and Health* and regained about forty pounds of body weight in a month.

Following a great summer with a forestry job related to my major, I enrolled in the local Christian Science Sunday School. And even though I valued my study of Christian Science more than all my university studies, my academic grades improved dramatically, to the point that I was awarded scholarships without applying for them. I was grateful to be accepted into membership in The Mother Church (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston) and a branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and to participate in the university's Christian Science organization.

My eyesight improved, too. References to vision, sight, insight, perception, clarity, and focus in the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, as well as healings of blindness and poor vision published in the Christian Science magazines, supported my earlier conviction that I need not settle for the diminution of my eyesight. *Science and Health* assured me: "Sight, hearing, all the spiritual senses of man, are eternal. They cannot be lost. Their reality and immortality are in Spirit and understanding, not in matter,—hence their permanence" (p. 486). Before long I was able to see clearly, and I have never again needed glasses for distance vision or reading fine print.

Complete healing of the dislocated shoulder took longer. As the doctor had predicted, one day the shoulder suddenly slipped out of joint while I was swimming the backstroke. This time, though, as I wondered what to do next, I felt a calmness I can only describe as the Christ, the consciousness of a liberating presence and power beyond myself. This brought a release of fear and tension, and the shoulder returned to a normal position with no effort on my part. I was so grateful for this quick recovery and for the feeling that God was with me.

In the next few years, dislocation recurred twice. Both times, the shoulder came back into place right away without special effort. It was clear, however, that it's not enough to be content with physical relief. To maintain my health, I needed to better understand my eternal harmony as the creation of God, Spirit. Strong statements in passages such as this one from *Science and Health* were helpful: "Man is indestructible and eternal. Sometime it will be learned that mortal mind

constructs the mortal body with this mind's own mortal materials. In Science, no breakage nor dislocation can really occur" (p. 402).

When the shoulder dislocated a third time, I reached out to God in prayer and felt it move back into place. That was decades ago, and I have had no further problems with the shoulder.

I'm deeply grateful to have had my earlier spiritual intuitions validated by Christian Science, although I soon learned that mere optimism and youthful rebellion could not bring me the harmony I felt was right. I needed to correct in my thought false beliefs about God and my nature as God's creation.

Learning about God, Love, and about myself and others as God's expression has fulfilled my hopes abundantly. Through the study and practice of Christian Science, I continue to grow in understanding the healing and regenerating power of divine Love, which meets every human need.

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## KIDS

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# Jumping for joy

*Oliver*

**One winter**, I was having fun jumping into a pile of snow.

But one time when I jumped, my knee hit a big rock. My knee really hurt, and I called for help.

Right away, my mom was by my side sharing thoughts from God with me. I knew they were thoughts from God because they were good and helped me be calm. She told me that I can never fall out of God's care because God is everywhere. We both knew that the joy in my jump came from God, so it couldn't go away.



When we went inside the house, my mom and I talked about the lesson I'd learned that day and the spiritual truth I'd also learned.

The lesson was that I should be more aware of my surroundings before jumping. The spiritual truth was that my joy could never turn into something bad or be taken away.

As I thought more about God, the hurt in my knee went away.

I am grateful for this healing and have jumped for joy many times since!

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## HEALINGS

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# Painful elbow condition overcome

*John Marshall*

**I am very** grateful for Christian Science and the many healings I have had over my lifetime. One healing years ago was particularly memorable.

I grew up attending Christian Science Sunday School, but as a young adult I drifted away from Christian Science. While I never completely abandoned it, I did not attend church regularly and applied the teachings only when I encountered difficulties in business, relationships, and everyday life. For health problems, I typically sought medical attention.

But I eventually found that practicing Christian Science in this half-hearted way just doesn't work. I had to reconsider this approach after I developed a very painful elbow condition that prevented me from playing tennis, a sport that I loved and had played competitively and at a high level since my youth. The problem became chronic, and I finally decided to see a doctor. He ordered an MRI and told me that my

condition was the natural outcome of many years of stress and that nothing could be done short of surgery.

Well, there's an old saying that "man's extremity is God's opportunity," and I did what I should have done from the start: I turned wholeheartedly to God. Disregarding what the doctor had told me, I turned my thoughts to the truths that I knew from my earlier study of Christian Science.

Around the same time, I was retiring from my business career, and this allowed me a lot of time to do a "deep dive" into Christian Science. I spent most of that summer reading the textbook *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy from cover to cover, reading the Christian Science magazines, and meeting on a regular basis with a Christian Science practitioner from whom I had requested treatment.

The practitioner and I prayed with the spiritual truths about God and man found in the Bible and *Science and Health*. We focused on the allness and perfection of God; the perfection of God's spiritual, eternal creation, man (a term that refers to each and every individual); and the nothingness of anything unlike God, such as discord and disease. Now, it's one thing to acknowledge and affirm these truths but quite another to really understand them, and that's where all my studying and praying came in.

As the summer progressed and the condition persisted, I had to resist the urge to constantly check my elbow to gauge my progress or the lack thereof. I realized that I had to turn my attention away from my body and not rely on the physical senses to tell me how I was doing. There were periods of discouragement when I didn't think I was making any progress. However, the practitioner assured me that I was progressing spiritually and that when we make spiritual progress, the body has to conform. *Science and Health* explains, "The body improves under the same regimen which spiritualizes the thought . . ." (p. 370).

Somewhere along the way, I stopped focusing on the problem and trying to fix my body and just enjoyed what I was learning about God and my wholly spiritual identity. Spiritual growth became my goal. It was sometime after this shift in thought that I realized

my arm was completely healed. I was able to resume playing tennis—and have played five or six days a week with complete freedom for many years since.

I am very grateful for this healing, but even more grateful for the confidence I gained in knowing that Christian Science is effective in healing any problem. Additionally, it was not long after this that I took Christian Science class instruction, which has deepened my love of this life-transforming Science and resulted in many healings and blessings over the years.

**John Marshall**

*Rowayton, Connecticut, US*

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## Purity of thought brings physical healing

*Name Withheld*

**I am grateful** for a healing I had some years ago as a result of purifying my thinking. It was summertime, and I had just flown to a large city to attend a weeklong professional conference. I was engaged to be married, but my spouse-to-be had not joined me on the trip. I had a number of friends and acquaintances who lived in the city I was visiting, so I made arrangements to meet up with some of them while I was in town.

One of these friends, who is also a Christian Scientist, is someone I have known for many years and have always found attractive. I was eager to hear their experiences with church and to share life updates.

As I left my hotel and headed to the subway station to meet my friend for dinner, I started experiencing discomfort in one of my legs. It came out of the blue, and I soon found myself limping. I began to pray as I hobbled along.

The thought came to me that “I am not here to commit adultery.” Mentally, I fervently declared this—and meant it. I understand Christ Jesus’ definition

of adultery to include not only an outright physical act, which was never even a consideration, but mental attraction and desire as well. He said, “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

Mary Baker Eddy expands on this in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, where she writes: “Sin and disease must be thought before they can be manifested. You must control evil thoughts in the first instance, or they will control you in the second. Jesus declared that to look with desire on forbidden objects was to break a moral precept. He laid great stress on the action of the human mind, unseen to the senses” (p. 234).

I knew from experience that healing comes about in Christian Science by correcting wrong thinking—in this case, by purifying my thinking and controlling evil thoughts before they controlled me. Although I wanted to be free of the physical problem, I was clear that I first needed to heal any immoral thoughts I might have had.

As I prayed with these thoughts, both the discomfort and the limp instantly disappeared. I was immediately able to stand up straight and walk without pain. I went to the restaurant, where my friend and I had a lovely and platonic visit as we shared many good ideas with each other. Later I went back to the hotel without any sign that I had experienced a problem with my leg. I am pleased to say that my spouse-to-be and I are now very happily married.

**Name Withheld**

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## No more bladder infections

*Sue Boyd Oakes*

**I grew up** in a family that depended on medical care for health. When I first experienced a bladder infection as a young adult, my mom, who had had this

condition herself, told me to call our family doctor for an appointment.

I saw the doctor that day and was given lab tests that confirmed the diagnosis. The medicine the doctor prescribed brought relief, but over the next two decades I had three more of these infections. Each was treated through the same medical process.

In my late thirties, I began to explore Christian Science, occasionally attending church services and reading the *Sentinel* and *The Christian Science Journal*. At the back of the *Journal* I found a directory of Christian Science practitioners—individuals who are engaged full-time in helping those who request treatment through prayer as taught in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.

I called a practitioner listed in my city and asked her some questions about Christian Science. She was very helpful, and I called her a number of times with new questions. After several of these calls, she invited me to introduce myself to her at the next Sunday service of the local branch Church of Christ, Scientist.

That Sunday morning I awoke with the symptoms of a severe bladder infection. From experience, I knew that there was no way I'd be able to attend the church service or be in any other public place until this condition was addressed. I called the practitioner to tell her why I couldn't possibly sit through an hour-long service and meet her afterward. She kindly asked me if I'd like her to pray to heal this condition. She explained that since we had talked of my being God's perfect spiritual creation, one of His beloved children, we had a wonderful opportunity to prove that right now.

Though surprised by this offer, I said yes and asked what I should do. She told me to get dressed to go to church and suggested that, until it was time to leave, I go out in the summer sunshine and wander about my backyard looking at the flowers and birds. I was just to enjoy the good that God was unfolding all around me and give no further thought to bladders. She would begin praying for me immediately, and we would meet each other after church later that morning.

I didn't really expect that I would be meeting her, but I did as she said. During the hour that followed, I was amazed to find that the symptoms simply ended. I was no longer in any discomfort or had the slightest symptom of infection. I drove to church in wonder, because what had just happened was not possible within the medical assumptions of cause and effect that I had always accepted as reality. But it *had* happened, proving this statement in *Science and Health*: "In metaphysics, matter disappears from the remedy entirely, and Mind takes its rightful and supreme place" (p. 156).

The healing was complete, and in the forty years since, I've never had another bladder infection. This experience taught me that Christian Science is not what is typically thought of as an alternative healing method. It isn't based on matter at all, but on Spirit, God. Healing in Christian Science is about learning our constant spiritual wholeness as God's likeness, and joyfully, gratefully demonstrating this as the only reality, in which we live to express the omnipotence of God, good, now and forever.

### **Sue Boyd Oakes**

*Auberry, California, US*

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## **A star within**

*Béatrice Labarthe*

It looks like summer light  
is switched off  
as cold autumn comes.  
Oh, but when darkness deepens,  
we see the bright stars above!

And there is always a star  
showing the presence of Christ,  
the light of Life within,  
the reliable light of divine Love  
offering  
the warmth of a universal affection

anytime, any season.

In such a clear atmosphere,  
how can I not burst with prayer  
to reach the heights of a life  
reflecting God's vital care?

**Béatrice Labarthe**

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BIBLE LENS

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## God the Preserver of Man

*from the Responsive Reading*

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**Psalms 27:1, 3, 5, 11, 14**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. . . . For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. . . . Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. . . . Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

To the metaphors of light and rock, the psalmist adds two more. The Hebrew terms translated *pavilion* and *tabernacle* portray a range of refuges, from an animal's lair or shepherd's tent to a sacred space for worship. "In short," one source asserts, "what the psalmist singlemindedly seeks is the experience of God's presence."

*from Section 1*

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## 2 | Jeremiah 31:3

*The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

*Drawn* (Hebrew, *māšak*) refers to drawing out or sustaining. Some modern versions of this text include wording about God's unceasing love, and one paraphrase has, "God told them, 'I've never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love, and more love!'"

## 3 | Isaiah 41:10–13

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: . . . Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.*

### Translation

*Don't be afraid. I am with you.*

*Don't tremble with fear.*

*I am your God.*

*I will make you strong,  
as I protect you with my arm  
and give you victories.*

*Everyone who hates you  
will be terribly disgraced; . . .*

*. . . . .  
You will look around  
for those brutal enemies,  
but you won't find them—  
they will be gone.*

*I am the LORD your God.*

*I am holding your hand,  
so don't be afraid.*

*I am here to help you.*

—Contemporary English Version

Isaiah 41 opens with the image of a court trial, using the invitation “Let us come near together to judgment” (v. 1). Arguments for God’s supremacy (see vv. 2–7) are followed by a salvation prophecy (see vv. 8–20). Verses 10–13 are part of this assurance that God will strengthen, uphold, and protect His children.

*Uphold* is translated from the Hebrew verb *tāmak*, which ranges in meaning from grasp or hold fast to support, attain, or lay hold of. The concept of upholding appears several times in the Hebrew Bible to depict God’s care for His creation. A psalmist writes, for example, “Thou upholdest me in mine integrity” (Psalms 41:12). And Isaiah 42:1 announces, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.”

## from Section 2

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### 6 | Psalms 120:1, 7

*In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me. . . . I am for peace.*

Here the poet presents himself as a man of peace. Surrounded by warring enemies, his comfort springs from God’s hearing his plea. The Hebrew term *‘ānā*, rendered *heard* in this passage, primarily means answer (see, for instance, Psalms 118:5; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 33:3). And *šālôm* (translated *peace*) has broad significance: fulfillment, prosperity, harmony, safety, and health.

### 7 | Psalms 32:7

*Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*

#### Translation

*You are my secret hideout!  
You protect me from trouble.  
You surround me with songs of rescue!*

—Common English Bible

### 8 | II Chronicles 20:1, 3, 4, 13–15, 17, 20–22, 30

*The children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. . . . And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: . . . And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; and he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you. . . . And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; . . . So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.*

With a large coalition of hostile forces only a day’s journey from Jerusalem, Judean king Jehoshaphat is understandably alarmed. But he turns to Yahweh for guidance and protection—and his public prayers are answered through the Levite Jahaziel, whose words echo Moses’ admonition during the Exodus: “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord” (Exodus 14:13). God’s people are to be witnesses, not warriors.

Divine deliverance takes form in an unexpected way—the armies of the opposition fight among themselves and destroy each other (see vv. 23, 24). News of this defeat reaches those kingdoms “and the fear of God was

on [them], when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel" (v. 29).

## 9 | Psalms 9:6, 7, 10

*O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: . . . But the Lord shall endure for ever: . . . And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

### Translation

*The enemy is finished—in ruins forever. . . .  
Yet, the LORD is enthroned forever.*

. . . . .

*Those who know your name trust you, O LORD,  
because you have never deserted those who seek your help.*

—GOD'S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

## from Section 3

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## 11 | Malachi 2:10

*Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*

### Translation

*Don't we all have the same father? Didn't the same God create us all? Then why do we break our promises to one another, and why do we despise the covenant that God made with our ancestors?*

—Good News Translation

## 12 | Micah 7:6, 7

*The son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look*

*unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.*

### Translation

*In these times sons treat their fathers like fools, daughters oppose their mothers, and young women quarrel with their mothers-in-law; your enemies are the members of your own family. But I will watch for the LORD; I will wait confidently for God, who will save me. My God will hear me.*

—Good News Translation

The prophet Micah began his ministry during a period of moral corruption in Judah. Here he laments not only community-wide treachery but also the distrust and betrayal that poison familial relationships. Like other Jewish seers, though, he maintains hope in God's restoration of peace.

## 13 | Philippians 2:2, 3

*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

### Translation

*. . . make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.*

—New Living Translation

## from Section 4

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## 15 | Psalms 55:16, 18

*I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. . . . He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.*



## Translation

*I will call to God for help.*

*And the Lord will save me.*

. . . . .

*Many are against me.*

*But he keeps me safe in battle.*

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

## 17 | Luke 9:38–43

*Behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.*

Just prior to this scene of failure and desperation, an event of sublime success takes place—Christ Jesus’ transfiguration (see vv. 28–36). “But the two pictures are intended to stand together,” remarks a scholar. “In both are Jesus’ true messianic status and power set forth: the one whom God approved on the mountaintop is he through whom God now acts on the plain; . . . Jesus’ messiahship is not a detached glory, but is relevant to even the most sordid human situation.”

Like the raising of the deceased man at Nain (see 7:11–15), this cure restores an only son to his parent. In each case, the healing secures the well-being of a family member currently or potentially dependent on the son for support.

## from Section 5

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## 18 | Psalms 86:2, 3

*Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.*

### Translation

*Protect my life, for I am faithful.*

*You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you.*

*Be gracious to me, Lord,*

*for I call to you all day long.*

—Christian Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>

## 20 | Proverbs 3:5, 24

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. . . . When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*

### Translation

*With all your heart*

*you must trust the LORD*

*and not your own judgment.*

. . . . .

*you will rest without a worry*

*and sleep soundly.*

—Contemporary English Version

*Derek*, the Hebrew noun rendered *ways*, can encompass behavior, custom, and specific acts. A commentary explains: “In all aspects of life God is to be taken into account. The thought of him is not to be limited to special seasons or sacred places. He is to be acknowledged in the home, in business, at work, and at play.”

## 22 | Psalms 42:8

*The Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.*

### Translation

*... each day the LORD pours his unfailing love upon me, and through each night I sing his songs, praying to God who gives me life.*

—New Living Translation

## 23 | Psalms 17:15

*I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

### Translation

*Because I have lived right, I will see your face. When I wake up, I will see your likeness and be satisfied.*

—New Century Version<sup>®</sup>

## from Section 6

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## 24 | Isaiah 26:3, 4

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever.*

### Translation

*You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [both its inclination and its character] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You. So trust in the Lord (commit yourself to Him, lean on Him, hope confidently in Him) forever;...*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMPC)

## 25 | Isaiah 2:2, 4, 5

*It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it... And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

Although many hills and mountains in the ancient world topped Mount Zion (Jerusalem's Temple Mount) in height, Isaiah predicts a spiritual dominance to eclipse every other elevation. *Gôy*, the Hebrew term translated *nations*, generally referred to Gentiles. God's reign would be universally recognized and honored—and the resulting unity would forever eliminate war.

After confirming that the God of Israel would become God to all peoples, verse 5 urges Jews to immediate action. A source notes, "Isaiah is not content just to reiterate this popular vision of the future destiny of Zion; he uses it as the basis for exhortation regarding the present conduct of the people."

## 26 | Numbers 6:24–26

*The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*

### Translation

*The LORD bless you, and keep you [protect you, sustain you, and guard you];  
The LORD make His face shine upon you [with favor],  
And be gracious to you [surrounding you with lovingkindness];  
The LORD lift up His countenance (face) upon you [with divine approval],  
And give you peace [a tranquil heart and life].*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

Sometimes called the Aaronite benediction, this blessing was given by God to Moses for his brother's use



(see v. 23). It caps a two-chapter discussion of priestly laws for maintaining physical and moral purity within the Hebrew community. While today divine blessings are often viewed as general, Israelites expected and experienced them in very practical ways. The six acts of God listed in this passage—bless, keep, make His face shine, be gracious, lift up His face, and grant peace—were understood to cover the entirety of daily life.

Virtually identical benedictions were deciphered from two ancient silver scrolls—each about the circumference of a child’s finger—discovered near Jerusalem in 1979. After the lengthy and painstaking work it took to unroll these scrolls without damaging them, they were determined to be among the oldest surviving biblical texts (dating to around 600 BC) and the only ones that have been found from before the Babylonian exile.

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Read a related article, “Where Jesus found refuge” by Robert R. MacKusick, at [cssentinel.com/found-refuge](https://cssentinel.com/found-refuge)

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LETTERS & CONVERSATIONS

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## Letters & Conversations

*Anne Melville, Grace S. Duffy*

### > Ken Cooper, “The balloon lesson,” cssentinel.com, October 25, 2024

This is a super explanation of how to handle fear. Such a beautifully structured poem.

**Anne Melville**, *Kaikohe, Northland, New Zealand*

### > Gordon Sass, “Love overcomes grief,” Sentinel, September 9, 2024

When I first read this testimony, I glossed over the sentence “Today, divine Love continues dwelling with Freddie and me and blessing our home.” But later in the day I began to understand what that meant for me. I still had moments of sadness regarding my husband’s passing, but now came the healing realization that divine Love’s expressions of love didn’t stop when my husband passed. I began to see that because God, Love, is infinite and therefore can’t be limited or halted, each of Love’s offspring is also unrestricted in his or her abundant expression of love. Thank you to the author for sharing this testimony with all of us who are benefiting from it. It was just what I needed to enable me to open up more to receive the wonderful, ongoing blessings of God’s dear, ever-present love!

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