



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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A perfect solution

Lisa Rennie Sytsma

I was too far underwater. I could see the surface above me, but I knew I wouldn't be able to make it in time. So, as a student of Christian Science, I started to pray. I held to the spiritual truth that, because God was the source of my supply, I could never find myself in a situation where I lacked anything I needed. That included air.

As I prayed, I suddenly realized that I wasn't actually in any danger. I was asleep in bed—it was only a dream. But I didn't wake up. Instead, in the dream, I was able to breathe underwater.

Essentially, to my sense of it, God, divine Love, had provided a perfect solution—underwater breathing—to a problem God was utterly unaware of because it was happening only in my dream. Being unaware of the problem, God was also unaware of the solution. But the solution sure worked for me!

On the surface, this experience may not seem applicable to what we call real life. But the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, writes, “Mortal existence is a dream of pain and pleasure in matter, a dream of sin, sickness, and death; and it is like the dream we have in sleep, in which every one recognizes his condition to be wholly a state of mind” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 188). This statement may seem surprising. But it's a conclusion she reached through reason and revelation, based on her close study of the words and works of Christ Jesus. This study enabled her to heal as Jesus did and to teach others to do the same.

So healing in Christian Science is not a question of simply improving inharmonious material circumstances—for instance, fixing a sick material body by turning it into a well material body. It's recognizing, through the power of Christ, the true idea of God, that at no point have we ever actually lost our health, wholeness, and vitality. They are indestructible qualities of God, and therefore indestructible qualities of each one of us as His creation, His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26, 27). But when we begin to awaken to

this reality, the effect in our human experience is that what felt to us like a sick body suddenly feels well.

Healing in Christian Science is recognizing, through the power of Christ, that we have never actually lost our health, wholeness, and vitality.

God never sees His creation as anything less than spiritual and perfect. Our material problems are solved, not because God changes anything, but because our thought adjusts—our view of ourselves grows closer to His. What looks to us like a perfect, God-given solution to any problem is really just our improved belief—or, better yet, our improved understanding that we never had a problem to begin with—made manifest. As we gain a better grasp of our oneness with God, we see that oneness—which, in reality, is always present—ever more clearly in our experience.

That's why instantaneous healing can occur in the waking dream of believing we are both material and spiritual, just as instantaneous healing happened in my sleeping dream. The substance of our experience is 100 percent thought. Inharmonies in our experience, including in the body, can change as fast as our thought can. If you think about it, don't many of the solutions to problems that came to Jesus sound like something that might happen in a dream? He needed to pay taxes; the money was found in a fish's mouth. He needed enough to feed thousands; the available bread and fish multiplied as it was distributed. He needed to get from one place to another; he was suddenly there. He needed to get to a ship in the middle of a stormy lake; he walked on water. All of those things proved that matter actually is a dream state—the Adam dream (see Genesis 2:21). This dream state's so-called laws are as malleable as the so-called material law I thought I was subject to in my sleeping dream.

God's law, on the other hand, is ever present, unchanging, and always operating. I once broke my ankle playing volleyball. The ankle was visibly out of alignment. I prayed as I had learned in Christian Science, holding to the truth stated in *Science and Health* that “accidents are unknown to God, or immortal Mind . . .” (p. 424). But part of me kept arguing, “But it *did* happen! I was there!” As I reached out to God to

feel His presence and power, I suddenly got a very clear understanding that it had not, in reality, happened. It was an illusion, a waking dream. The fact was that God created me whole, and nothing could change that. The pain vanished, though the ankle still looked injured. But I was confident of the truth I had grasped. I went to bed, and when I woke up the next morning, the ankle was perfectly aligned.

When we listen for the voice of God, divine Love, and obey Love's law, Love provides a perfect solution to our problem. Like the "underwater breathing" in my sleeping dream or the set ankle in my waking dream, that solution will present itself in a form that makes sense to us, even while we're still striving to awaken from this mortal dream. Let's rejoice that both Jesus' demonstration of Christ and the divine Science Mrs. Eddy discovered have shown us *how* to wake up. As each individual dream dissolves, our path to seeing the perfection we have, in reality, right now grows brighter!

Lisa Rennie Sytsma, Editor

The joy of overcoming self-righteousness

Self-righteousness makes us blind; understanding that we all reflect one Mind restores clear vision.

David Watson

In my final year of university, outwardly, everything seemed to be going well for me. I was attending my chosen university, specializing in the subject I loved best. I had no money worries. I was dating the girl I wanted to marry and would marry. But I was unhappy. It seemed that nothing was quite good enough for me. The lectures seemed dull, the lecturers tedious and old. My academic work seemed to be a grind.

Then one morning while reading the weekly Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*, I realized that my feeling that nothing was good enough for me was my problem, not someone else's. It was self-righteousness robbing me of my joy. With that realization came the truth that gratitude would restore joy in my work and life. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes: "Are we really grateful for the good already received? Then we shall avail ourselves of the blessings we have, and thus be fitted to receive more" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 3).

The effect of this insight was immediate. Gratitude was like a light turned on in a dark room. I felt joy in all that I was doing. A good friend asked me what had happened to me because I was so changed. I was deeply impressed that Christian Science could heal character faults in this way.

Was that the end of self-righteousness in my thinking? No. My unhappiness had provided a reason to grapple with and heal my immediate problem, but I had more to do. Mrs. Eddy also writes: "Self-ignorance, self-will, self-righteousness, lust, covetousness, envy, revenge, are foes to grace, peace, and progress; they must be met manfully and overcome, or they will uproot all happiness. Be of good cheer; the warfare with one's self is grand; it gives one plenty of employment, and the divine Principle worketh with you,—and obedience crowns persistent effort with everlasting victory" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 118).

"A Rule for Motives and Acts" in the *Manual of The Mother Church* by Mrs. Eddy helps us guard our thoughts from the temptation of self-righteousness. It states, in part, "The members of this Church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil, from prophesying, judging, condemning, counseling, influencing or being influenced erroneously" (p. 40).

Self-righteousness causes us to judge others erroneously. Jesus illustrated this with the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (see Luke 18:10–14). The Pharisee's prayer starts, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are," and after complacently outlining his adherence to ritual observances, he concludes that

he is superior to the publican. But it's the publican's behavior, acknowledging his weaknesses and his need for God's mercy, that gains the commendation of Jesus.

In *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy identifies the primary demands of Christian Science—to have one God and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Then she adds, "It should be thoroughly understood that all men have one Mind, one God and Father, one Life, Truth, and Love" (p. 467).

It is not enough to have one God and Father; we have to *understand* that *all* men have one God and Father—one Mind. When I indulge in self-righteousness, I am claiming that, while all men have one Mind, this Mind speaks especially clearly to me. This misperception blinds me to the spiritual intuitions that come from Mind. Commenting on the parable mentioned earlier, Mrs. Eddy states, "Blindness and self-righteousness cling fast to iniquity" (*Science and Health*, p. 448).

If self-righteousness makes us blind, understanding that we all reflect one Mind restores clear vision. Ideas have one source and owner, and that is God. We cannot say, "That was my idea," because all right ideas come from the one, infinite Mind, though certainly we each reflect those ideas in our own unique way. No longer blinded or dazzled by a sense of our own brilliance, we are more receptive to the ideas that are reflected by all of God's children around us. We can recognize and appreciate divine inspiration, whether we hear it or another does, and feel gratitude either way. We don't feel the need to defend our human opinions from overthrow. We won't insist on our own preferred conclusion but will seek the highest human expression of God's law in the situation.

What can we do if a group of people we are working with arrives at a conclusion we feel is incorrect? While a high sense of ethics and morals is requisite and protects us from making mistakes, Christian Scientists have a unique mission to affirm that God is Principle, Mind, and Truth, and that He is governing all, at all times.

The Bible's book of Proverbs advises, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (3:5). We can know that God does not make mistakes, and neither do His children, who reflect this all-knowing intelligence. Then we can hold

firmly to the great truth that God, Spirit, maintains the perfection of His spiritual creation. Divine Truth corrects errors of data, reasoning, and judgment. We can prayerfully support the honest work of our group, whether or not we agree with the direction it is taking.

No longer blinded by self-righteousness, we are more receptive to the ideas that are reflected by all of God's children.

Of course, we don't condone violating either God's law or human laws. All decisions need to bless all. But individuals may differ on how best to achieve a shared goal, and we don't want to be self-righteous in thinking that our way is the only way. I have found that when I have acknowledged God's power and control, either decisions have been corrected without inharmony or I have come to the realization that I was mistaken and could support the group cheerfully. Not only does God originate and own all right ideas, but He supports and sustains them. Our job is to affirm His control and rejoice in His work.

In the early days of Christian Science, the actions of some of Mrs. Eddy's students disappointed her, including attempts to claim her work as their own. Pointing out the error to them didn't always cause them to change their thoughts or actions. But her poem "Feed My Sheep" includes these words addressing God, the great Shepherd:

Thou wilt bind the stubborn will,

Wound the callous breast,

Make self-righteousness be still,

Break earth's stupid rest.

(*Poems*, p. 14)

To me, the key word is *Thou*. It is the Shepherd who helps us see through the delusion of self-righteousness—in ourselves or others. Our righteousness, even our perfection, is our birthright from God, our Father, who created us in His own likeness. No human opinion can detract from that perfection.

I once thought that self-righteousness should be avoided just because it made me unhappy and limited my effectiveness. But as I progressed in my study and practice of Christian Science, I realized that self-righteousness was also making it harder for me to understand God's all-presence and control. Love for God and man demands that we humbly overcome the temptations of self-righteousness. When Mrs. Eddy describes as "grand" the "warfare with one's self" that accomplishes this, I sense her loving and encouraging smile, and I also notice the promise of "everlasting victory" in the work. So, we can have a grand time doing the work!

Conscious worth

God's love infinitely outweighs trauma, sin, family history, and genetics.

Ann Nelson

I've always been fascinated by the Apostle Paul. He was transformed from a persecutor of Christians to a leader of Christians, but he suffered greatly along the way.

In the Bible, he speaks candidly about his struggles, particularly with sin. He says that when he tries to do good, he finds himself doing bad. As he begins to awaken to Christ, he proclaims that "those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death" (Romans 8:1, 2, Eugene Peterson, *The Message*). In my case, the black cloud was addiction.

What I have come to understand is that God is bigger—bigger than addiction and bigger than the need to try to relieve anxiety and pain through drugs and alcohol. God's love infinitely outweighs trauma, sin, family history, and genetics. God has not abandoned

or forsaken us. His supporting and steadfast love is powerful and inevitable.

When I was young, I struggled with drug use, which I stopped then, but I continued to struggle with functional alcoholism into my adult years. It was an on-again, off-again relationship, which vacillated between abstinence and reliance. There was a lot of history that I wanted to forget, but, like Paul, I knew there was something higher and holier—something substantial that would keep me from turning to alcohol, seeking to find relief. For me, this something was and is God.

Eventually, I saw that healing would not come from condemning myself or from labeling the behavior as right or wrong, good or bad, but from something deeper. I needed to discover my true worth, and Mary Baker Eddy's words "... conscious worth satisfies the hungry heart, and nothing else can" (*Message to The Mother Church for 1902*, p. 17) spoke directly to me.

After reading about Mrs. Eddy's life, I saw that she didn't have an easy life. Before her discovery of Christian Science, she experienced poor health, the death of loved ones, having her child taken from her, divorce, and life-threatening injuries from an accident. As the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, she faced personal and religious persecution and ridicule for being a woman who challenged entrenched beliefs in the fields of science, theology, and medicine. Yet she persevered. Who is able to do that but someone who understands their worth?

Over time, I prayed just to be open to God. As simple as that might sound, it wasn't, because I had been blaming Him for my problem. I now tried to see evidence of Him in everything—in my family, in nature, everywhere—and I was seeing it. But I still struggled to see evidence of God in myself. I had to ask myself some important questions: "Do you really think that God made everything good except for you?" and "Would God, who is Love, give His love to one person but not to another?"

God does not show favoritism or give preferential treatment. He loves us all equally and knows us only as good because He is good. The change in my thought was gradual. But whenever I mentally fell down or failed to

see God's love for me, I would acknowledge that He is Love and that I am His beloved daughter. Then I would correct the belief that I could be separated from Him and "get back up." I knew the answer lay in my refusal to be manipulated by intrusive thoughts claiming that I was somehow defective, unlovable, or unhealable.

I considered Paul's journey. I saw that it was through Christ that he persevered, found a new understanding of his worth, and became a better servant of God—and a healer. His conversion will always remind me that God can touch anyone's heart and transform them. In God's eyes, each of His children is complete. In his letter to Christians in Rome, Paul writes, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). To me, renewal means seeing myself, or my life, the way God sees me, rather than seeing through the lens of human experience, wounds from the past, or the thoughts and opinions of others.

One thing that can keep us from experiencing this renewal is the belief that we were created materially, like in the allegory of Adam and Eve in the Bible (see Genesis 2, 3). Here, man is made from dust, and woman is made from man's rib. A talking, lying serpent appears and tempts them into behavior they know is wrong, while making it sound as though he is their friend. Then they are cursed to a lifetime of suffering and pain.

To me, this sounds a lot like how addiction works. But we are not cursed, disobedient mortals fallen from grace. Not miserable sinners with no hope of redemption or forgiveness. A good God would never condemn His children. He only shows us our worth.

I knew that it was my thinking that needed to be transformed. Because God knows only perfection, I knew that He did not need to change. He did not need to talk louder or make some grand gesture to let me know that I could love or trust Him. I think of my very existence as His grand gesture, and I know that He maintains and protects this existence with all the tenderness and love that a true Parent would.

God's love melted the hardness in my heart, and I became willing to accept my goodness and freedom.

Then one day, I realized that my desire to feel good and to know God's love had just become bigger than my willingness to suffer. This was many years ago, and I have not had a drink since.

Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "Mortals must gravitate Godward, their affections and aims grow spiritual,—they must near the broader interpretations of being, and gain some proper sense of the infinite,—in order that sin and mortality may be put off" (p. 265).

This gravitation toward and desire for good, God, leads us to the blessing of conscious worth. False promises disappear in the light of good because God's love will always be bigger, and it will never fail.

No! No! Know!

It's what God, Truth, says that matters.

Virginia Young

My daughter-in-law was visiting with their new golden retriever puppy, Butter, whose greeting involved jumping on me excitedly. His paws were sometimes muddy, so to protect my clothing, I shouted, "No! No! No!"

Now, this dear puppy must have been confused—not sure whether I was greeting him or scolding him. My daughter-in-law sweetly said, "Butter, down," and he immediately stopped jumping. Butter sat down obediently, under control. It occurred to me that I could take a lesson from this experience—that this exchange with the puppy presented an opportunity to progress in my study and practice of Christian Science.

I often mentally say "No! No! No!" to thoughts about the sickness, ill will, destruction, and so on that appear to define our reality. But sometimes that "No, no, no" has been just a reaction, without the understanding authority that brings healing.

How often do we hear about a health woe, a fierce conflict, or an environmental disaster? They are often presented very graphically or alarmingly on the news. Taking a cue from the master Christian, Jesus, Mary Baker Eddy says in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “The only civil sentence which he had for error was, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan’” (p. 7). If Jesus rebuked Satan, error—the suggestion that anything not coming from God can be real or have power—by demanding that Satan’s lies “get . . . behind” him, then that left God, the only truth-giver and source of all right ideas, in front of him. It’s what God, Truth, says that matters! Following Jesus’ example, I realized that I too could listen for Christ, Truth’s healing message, giving me the idea or ideas that would negate every suggestion coming from the liar, Satan.

It benefits us to ask ourselves, “Who said that?” with each thought that comes to us. Mrs. Eddy directs us in *Science and Health*: “Stand porter at the door of thought. Admitting only such conclusions as you wish realized in bodily results, you will control yourself harmoniously” (p. 392). This bids us to focus on and discern the origin and therefore validity of each thought. Did God say it? Did the one and only Mind, the source of all true thought, give us that message? Or was it an erroneous suggestion pretending to be our thought? A cautionary line in a beloved poem by Mrs. Eddy, “‘Feed my Sheep,’” says of God, “I will listen for Thy voice, / Lest my footsteps stray” (*Poems*, p. 14).

One day, I found myself in a dentist’s office in need of an emergency surgical procedure. It happened to be the same day that my city was shutting down because of the Covid pandemic. The atmosphere in the office was fraught with stress and panic. Once the lengthy procedure was completed, I was sent home with instructions to use six different prescribed and over-the-counter medications meant to relieve pain, swelling, and infection. At that point, I was pretty stressed myself.

As I got into my car to go home, I called a Christian Science practitioner, someone who had lovingly dedicated his life to a full-time career of praying for people in need of healing. Rather than allow me to go on and on relating my sad tale, he stopped

my blubbering by stating the spiritual fact that God was with me, which is true for everyone.

I realized that instead of reacting with a helpless “No! No! No!” to the pain, worry, and stress, I could silence those lies by knowing this spiritual truth. I immediately felt so loved, safe, and free from any fearful predictions about the future. I felt only the healing balm of Christ. The place where the surgery had been done healed instantaneously and completely. The practitioner and I rejected the prognosis of pain and swelling—neither of which ever came to pass—and I didn’t take any medication.

Christ Jesus, our Way-shower, has given us a master class in how to deal with any type of ailment. His strong rebuke, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matthew 16:23), has been paraphrased to say, “Out of my way, Satan!” (J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*) and “Satan, get lost!” (Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message*). Based on his understanding of his authority over every false suggestion, Jesus was free to listen for God’s voice only—the voice of good, which tells us that God is here with us, not subjecting us to harm or discord.

God is Spirit and made everything spiritual, so suggestions that life is material are just that: suggestions. They have no reality or power. Jesus showed us that we have the authority to reject these suggestions and nip them in the bud. He showed us that we too can say no effectively with his promise “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Jesus also directed us to follow him by being obedient to God. If we commit to listening to God and acting according to Truth’s direction, our experience will reflect harmonious control, too. When directives from God take root in our thinking, we know more of the truth, and our actions must follow the same good path that Jesus did.

The final verse of Hymn 85 in the *Christian Science Hymnal* sums it up so beautifully:

All the way that we must go
We will take at Thy direction,

Where the floods of trouble flow
Find Thy perfect, calm reflection;
On the path that has no turning,
Patience, courage, meekness learning.
(Edith Gaddis Brewer, © CSBD)

Music, God, and joyful camaraderie

Like a holy hymn that inspires, Christ, Truth, reaches into every corner of thought.

Annette Dutenhoffer

Recently, I went to a symphony concert. A friend of mine is getting her college degree in violin performance, and it was great to experience all of the musicians playing together as one beautiful, richly textured voice. From harp to drum, from violin to horn, all were in harmonious agreement.

For many, music speaks to a love of joy, peace, and harmony. Musically speaking, harmony is a structure involving tones put together in chords, especially in a way that is pleasing to the ear. Music has the power to unify; intricate harmonies, rousing rhythms, and bouncing beats can move us to joyful camaraderie.

Spiritual harmony is as continuous and steadfast as its source, God.

Gentle melodies, soothing strains, and soaring harmonies bypass mere hearing and sing to our spiritual sense. Spiritual sense is our ability to feel the presence of God, Spirit, in the depths of our being. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, writes, “Mental melodies and strains of sweetest music supersede conscious sound. Music is the rhythm of head

and heart” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 213).

In the first verse of a poem titled “Christ My Refuge,” Mrs. Eddy writes,

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

(*Poems*, p. 12)

This brings to mind a healing experience in the Bible. In the Bible’s book of First Samuel (see 16:14–23), we read of King Saul’s struggles with what appear to be debilitating episodes of fear. His servants suggest that he find someone who can play soothing music for him in those moments of anguish. King Saul agrees, and one of his servants recommends David, a young man who is known to be a skillful musician and is devoted to the one God. When suffering from one of these attacks, Saul asks David to play for him, and the strains of music from David’s harp ease the king’s distress. He is suddenly well. Through music, David expresses God’s law of harmony, and it has a healing effect.

At its best, music expresses God’s law of goodness, joy, holiness, and health. This law is an ever-present and active power that transforms us. I understand this active power to be the Christ. Mrs. Eddy explains, “Christ is the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness” (*Science and Health*, p. 332). This Christ message is actively bringing peace, stillness, and comfort to humanity today. It comes to us through the Science of Christ, or Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy defines her discovery this way: “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).

Spiritual harmony, then—for everyone, everywhere—is as continuous and steadfast as its source, God. Like a holy hymn that inspires and uplifts, Christ, Truth,

reaches into every corner of thought and shows us the way to healing.

At one time, for several nights in a row, I awoke in great despair about world events and the images of suffering I saw on the news night after night. I couldn't shake the feeling that the tragic situations in many parts of the world were beyond my help—the help of one person so far away. I asked God, divine Love, to help me better understand the universality of His law of harmony and good. This line from the second verse of a loved hymn—lyrics and melody together—came to my thought: “Let peace begin with me; let this/be the moment now” (*Christian Science Hymnal: Hymns 430–603*, No. 521, by Jill Jackson. © Jan-Lee Music 1955, 1983). It rang out to my spiritual sense right there in the dark and shone a light on how I could help in a practical way.

That brief musical message reminded me that one thought aligned with divine Love's law of harmony brings peace to that individual—and benefits everyone included in that person's thought. The despair and helplessness I felt about world events dissolved as I rejoiced in the power and presence of Love's all-inclusive law of peace for me and for all. Since this law is perpetual, it is available to all mankind in every moment—including this moment and the next—throughout eternity.

This message of light in the darkness symbolized for me the Christ light shining right where human despair seems darkest. The Gospel of Luke relates the birth of the baby Jesus (see 2:8–20). It says that there were shepherds in the fields watching over their flock in the night. I can only imagine how *dark* the darkness in the countryside would have been in those days!

The Gospel account says that suddenly, an angel came to them, resplendent with the glory of God. The angel was there to share the good news that the Messiah had been born and to tell them where he could be found. “Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” What a glorious symphony of hope and harmony.

So even as we enjoy concerts and other experiences with music, let's be sure to also tune into melodious thoughts

—thoughts affirming the comforting and healing power of God's law of harmony.

Jesus' temptations

Immediately after Christ Jesus' baptism and God's stirring endorsement of His “beloved Son,” the Master faced a series of temptations—attempts to dissuade him from his God-given purpose (see Matthew 3:16, 17 and 4:1–11). He answered them with scriptural authority, showing that evil is to be resisted and destroyed through divine power.

Jesus' early trials are seen as preparation for his unique mission as well as the model for his followers in withstanding temptations. Hebrews 4:15 affirms that Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He remained steadfast in the face of trials and temptations throughout his ministry—for example, when a crowd tried to crown him king, when his brothers urged him to show himself openly in Judea, and when onlookers mocked him on the cross (see John 6:15, 7:2–6, and Mark 15:29–32).

At the last supper, the Savior commended his disciples: “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations” (Luke 22:28). And the prayer he taught includes the petition “Lead us not into temptation” (Matthew 6:13). First John proclaims, “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (5:18).

“Not through sin or suicide,” writes Mary Baker Eddy, “but by *overcoming* temptation and sin, shall we escape the weariness and wickedness of mortal existence, and gain heaven, the harmony of being” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 53).

For more on this topic, see “Temptation defused” by Geoffrey J. Barratt.

Weekly updates: August 31, 2026

Replays of Annual Meeting 2026

The replay of Annual Meeting 2026 is available to watch in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. The replay of the Sunday afternoon hymn sing is also available in English. These replays will be accessible online for one year.

It was a joy for members of The Mother Church to come together, online and in person, to share love and gratitude for Christian Science and to hear inspiring reports from Church officers and from the Field.

To watch the replays, visit christianscience.com/annualmeeting.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

College Summit in October at Principia College

Current college students, recent graduates, professors, and high school juniors and seniors are warmly invited to join us at the 2026 College Summit this fall. Focusing on unity, the event will be rooted in the Bible quote “That they all may be one” (John 17:21).

Get ready to think deeply, build community, and discuss issues with others who are navigating a similar stage in life as you. You’ll come away from this unifying weekend refreshed and inspired—and with new friends, too.

The summit is being held at Principia College in Elmhurst, Illinois, October 23–25. Housing and transportation to

and from St. Louis Lambert International Airport are available.

Register at christianscience.com/summits, then spread the word and share with others. We look forward to seeing you!

New “What is Christian Science?” brochure available

With an updated text, a refreshed design, and a new QR code linked to christianscience.com, the new brochure expresses the timeless healing message of Christian Science in a way that speaks to hearts hungering for a higher understanding of God and man.

This brochure is available in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. Branch churches can now order print copies through the online store or by calling 1-800-877-8400 (Canada/US) or 1-515-362-7463. A digital copy, which Reading Rooms are free to print locally for distribution, is available at christianscience.com/brochure.

We look forward to joining with you in sharing the healing message of this brochure with newcomers and interested seekers.

Does God actually exist?

Luke Berberich

I was spiraling.

I’d been working at a summer camp for Christian Scientists, and on my day off, I was struggling with a storm of aggressive thoughts about myself, those I cared about, and even the existence of God. In the middle of all this negativity, I thought, “How can God exist when I’m struggling with all these thoughts?”

Doubting God’s existence was something that had never come up for me before. I had grown up attending Christian Science Sunday School. I had experienced

numerous healings and spent a lot of time studying the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.

Despite all this, there I was—having a crisis of faith. I thought, “God, please give me a sign that You exist and that I will be OK.” I expected to hear a booming voice from the heavens telling me, in cinematic fashion, that I wasn’t alone. But that didn’t happen. After feeling dejected about this apparent lack of divine communication, I suddenly had a very simple thought come to me: “I should go fill up my water bottle.”

After getting some water, I was ready to start the walk back to my cabin when I ran into the camp director, whom I’ve known for years. When he asked how I was, I said that I wasn’t feeling my best. Unexpectedly, he told me that “ice cream usually helps” and invited me to his home at camp to enjoy some ice cream. I agreed, and he served me vanilla ice cream with raspberries. While he couldn’t stay for long, he told me I could stick around to finish my ice cream and play with his dog.

After he left and I spent some time with his dog, the storm of negative thoughts—which had been so imposing before—melted away. I realized that this was a clear indication that God was fulfilling my need and is here for me. I could see that, since God is Love and the source of all love, the love expressed by the camp director wasn’t random, but was a specific expression of God as Love in my life.

After this dawned on me, I felt joyful for the rest of the day. It was a strong reminder that God

exists and is taking care of me in sometimes unexpected but always perfect ways.

Fast forward to this past summer, when I was in Boston for an internship. While I’m used to being away from family and most of my friends, this experience felt different. It was a new level of independence, and early on, I was very lonely. I also felt a lack of closeness with God—like I was out of God’s reach.

Previously, when I felt lonely, I would spend time in the park watching geese and other animals. It always brought me joy and comfort. So, when I prayed for

a solution, the idea came to me to go to a nearby park. After spending several minutes watching geese, I noticed an older woman walk over and affectionately feed them. We each observed how much the other was enjoying the presence of the geese. We started talking about how much we loved nature and how beautiful it is. Time passed, and I realized that we had enjoyed a substantially long conversation, as it was almost nighttime. We exchanged names and went on our way.

As I left the park, I reflected on my experience with my new friend and the mutual love and appreciation we shared for God’s creation. To me, this proved that God was not only present with me but had also shown me that, despite being away from people I knew, I wasn’t alone. In fact, I was in a city full of God’s children.

I’m so glad to have learned that no matter how I perceive God at a particular moment, God is always present, always caring for me.

Now I understand that even when a challenge arises, God’s love will always be there for me—sometimes in unexpected ways that are more perfect than I could ever imagine.

Prayer dissolves congestion

Susan Booth Mack Snipes

Human life is full of variables, which means we’re constantly making decisions. What to wear. What to eat. What route to take. We’re confronted with bigger decisions, too. What school to attend and what to study there. Whether to marry. Whether to rent or buy, and where.

It can seem as if it’s our job to pray to have things run smoothly, to be sure we’re not making the wrong decisions. And while I certainly appreciate how prayer to understand God’s great love for all of us shines into my everyday experience as direct and unmistakable

guidance, I am learning that there is an even more powerful way that we are being guided as we pray.

An experience I had recently proved to me the healing effect of understanding that there is no possibility of failure in divine Science—the spiritual reality that is God’s ever-presence, omnipotence, and omniscience. On a Saturday before an important commitment on Sunday, I was on a biking outing with my family when the weather unexpectedly became quite chilly. I began experiencing congestion that would make it hard for me to follow through with my work the next day, and this persisted through the night.

In the morning, I was tempted to feel that I hadn’t prayed correctly before the outing—that it had been up to me to discern the need to dress more warmly or not go on the bike ride at all. But it was clear that this reasoning was focused on belief in the existence of a little personal ego—one that would never have enough wisdom or insight to sort through all the situations or conditions that we could possibly encounter on a given day.

Gently, I felt a release from that focus as I listened to be guided outward to a more infinite, God-based awareness. A powerful sense of the ever-presence of God, Love, filling all space, constituting all the conditions and circumstances of divine being, flooded my thought. And just as gently and unerringly, all the congestion melted away. Filled with a profound awareness of God’s allness, I went forward freely that Sunday.

There are no variables, mistakes, accidents, failures, or uncertainties in God’s all-in-allness, and our awareness of this does more than help us thread our way through the pitfalls of human experience. It shows us that Life is God. And it transforms any adversity or challenge into harmony and health as we are guided to increasingly accept that, since God is Life, all that is real is good.

As Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, states, “Science reveals Life as not being at the mercy of death, nor will Science admit that happiness is ever the sport of circumstance” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 250).

Think of it! God is the source and condition of God’s own all-in-allness. Having our thought guided outward to the infinite allows us to yield to this fact and watch our little ego circumstances be transformed into the freedom, health, and harmony of Love’s infinity.

Susan Booth Mack Snipes

Boston, Massachusetts, US

Severe case of poison oak quickly healed

Kirk Lindsay

During one summer vacation when I was very young, I contracted a severe case of poison oak and developed a rash over much of my body. Typically, people with poison oak would cover the rash with calamine lotion to soothe the itching and blisters, but my parents did not use any lotions or ointments on me. I’m confident that because they had successfully relied on Christian Science for all of our family’s health needs, they instead called a Christian Science practitioner to give me treatment through prayer.

At that time, it was common for folks to be out and about with poison oak, as it is not considered contagious. In my case, the rash had appeared early one week, and the following Sunday, as usual, my parents went to church, and I to my Sunday School class. My parents and I were yearning for the spiritual uplift and healing that come from hearing and pondering the ideas in the weekly Bible Lesson-Sermons found in the *Christian Science Quarterly*. Not wanting to cause the other students in the Sunday School undue concern, my parents made sure that my clothing covered most of the rash, with only my face and hands exposed. The extent of the rash was not obvious.

At the close of Sunday School that morning, I left completely healed. The blisters and raw areas had been replaced by healthy skin, and all itching was gone.

I am extraordinarily grateful for that Sunday School teacher. Despite the picture I presented, I expect she was holding in her thought my perfection as God's creation. As Christ Jesus demonstrated, when we have a firm understanding of our wholly spiritual identity, created in God's image and likeness, this brings healing.

The Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, reveal true existence as spiritual and therefore unaffected by physical conditions and matter-based beliefs about the body. They also tell us that this understanding heals the sick. As *Science and Health* says, "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" (p. 14).

Kirk Lindsay

Amador City, California, US

Fibroid tumor healed

Carol A. Miller

When I was expecting a baby, my husband and I worked with a midwife, and we planned to have the baby delivered in our home. However, during labor, the midwife decided that we needed to move to a hospital. There, an ultrasound was performed, and I was told I had a fibroid tumor. My initial reaction is best described by this sentence in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "A patient hears the doctor's verdict as a criminal hears his death-sentence" (p. 198). We were grateful for the help of the hospital staff in delivering the baby, but I was filled with fear based on the diagnosis.

In a follow-up meeting with the doctor, he pulled out a book with drawings that showed how the fibroid would grow over time if I didn't have it removed surgically. This time, though, I was better prepared. From the

same page as that sentence I had remembered in the delivery room, another statement came to thought: "The materialistic doctor, though humane, is an artist who outlines his thought relative to disease, and then fills in his delineations with sketches from textbooks." I asked the doctor what causes a fibroid tumor. He said that medical science didn't know the exact cause.

After I left the office, I knew I wouldn't be going back. I understood that the one and only cause was and is God, Spirit. I also knew that the drawings the doctor had shown me had nothing to do with what I am as the manifestation of God, Mind, and that as God's expression, I have only spiritual substance.

Though the condition wasn't painful, fears remained, and I persisted with my prayer and spiritual study. Especially helpful was a testimony from the chapter "Fruitage" in *Science and Health* relating the healing of a fibroid tumor (see pp. 603–604). The writer of the testimony mentions experiencing a great spiritual awakening. The writer knew that they were healed even before seeing any change in their physical condition, and the tumor immediately began to disappear.

In my case, the fibroid did grow larger over time, but I realized that I needed to look away from what the physical senses were reporting and turn to the facts known to spiritual sense. This took mental discipline, but at some point, all fear left, and I knew I was healed. The protrusion that had developed in my abdomen over a few years simply dissolved. In the decades since, I have been free of any similar symptoms.

I am grateful for what I learned about my relationship to God through this experience, because I am clearer than ever that substance is entirely spiritual, and that God, Spirit, is the only cause.

Carol A. Miller

Cupertino, California, US

Love's choreography

Barb Goodspeed Grant

Is it some swift breath of wind
that catapults starlings
by thousands
across the sky
as one
flashing at every turn
wheeling through marsh light o'er
the fens to
roost in sedge or reed beds
each to its own nest

or something higher than wind,
more divine, that
shows itself
adjusting
upholding
enveloping

Love's whisper is loud
Love's shout is quiet
God's song is endless
moving all in one accord

Barb Goodspeed Grant

Joan Tsalikis, *Stockport, Manchester, England*

> **Corinne Goodrich**, “How I got beyond the words,” July 6, 2026

Thanks to Ms. Goodrich for candidly and honestly sharing her experience. It is immensely helpful and inspiring.

Nancy Holmes, *Moscow, Idaho, US*

> **Kaye Cover**, “Knowing that God is good brings healing,” July 6, 2026

It is comforting to read these words that reaffirm our oneness with God and the surety of His love and care. Thanks to the author for sharing her story.

Ley Bouchard, *Sabin, Minnesota, US*

> **Kim Crooks Korinek**, “Christian Science: Its originality, scope, and impact,” June 1, 2026

Thanks for this editorial. I'm grateful for the weekly “Letters & Conversations” section that led me to it!

Christine Weller, *Barrie, Ontario, Canada*

Letters & Conversations

> **Jorian Clarke**, “Does healing require the human mind?” July 13, 2026

This brilliant article shows that healing is not up to us and our own brainwork. It is a helpful reminder of how spiritual healing happens and that it isn't dependent on our personal abilities.

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