



# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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# The far-reaching blessings of daily practice

Larissa Snorek

**Many people have a** daily practice of some kind. It might be getting in all your “steps” for that day, journaling, or doing morning prayer, yoga, or meditation. Some may play an instrument or a sport. Typically, we practice something because it makes us feel good or because we want to improve our capacity to do it.

For Christian Scientists, daily practice is important. We value it as a way of life and of growing spiritually. But what exactly does it *mean* to have a Christian Science practice?

Ask any Christian Scientist about their daily practice, and they might point to a wide variety of things—studying the Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*, praying to better understand God, being active in their local branch Church of Christ, Scientist, in some capacity, etc. These are natural, even essential, aspects of a vibrant practice. But a truly scientific Christian practice requires something more. At the heart of it must be the desire to deeply live Christianity. We may not always feel spiritually on fire when we sit down to study or when we attend church. But as we delve more deeply into how we can follow today what the master Christian, Jesus, taught and lived so long ago, it will not only bring good into our lives but will have a much more far-reaching effect.

Jesus’ example shows that as we practice living what we know of God, doing this naturally overflows to bless others. For instance, the Bible tells of a woman who was healed of a long-standing illness just by getting close enough to touch Jesus’ garment (see Matthew 9:20–22). The purity, innocence, and spiritual power that Jesus expressed attracted and healed others and encouraged them to find their own innocence, purity, and well-being. In her

*Message to The Mother Church for 1901*, Mary Baker Eddy wrote of the Messiah, or Christ, “This spirit of God is made manifest in the flesh, healing and saving men,—it is the Christ, Comforter, ‘which taketh away the sin of the world;’ . . .” (p. 9).

This Christ is the power behind our daily practice, and when we live what we know, it gives us opportunities to bless others. We couldn’t limit our practice of Christian Science to just ourselves if we tried! This characterizes scientific Christian practice: that it is not primarily for self-improvement or only for a certain group. Whenever we turn to the same Mind that was in Christ Jesus, we find that there is a “divine law of loving our neighbor as ourselves” that is in action (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 205).

To deeply live Christianity as Christian Science teaches is to let divine Love, God, be the impulse for thought and action—to let our lives be the visible evidence of what it means to know God as ever-present good. This is not an intellectual exercise. It’s also not about striving to be humanly good but about defending good as an inherent aspect of our, and everyone’s, true, spiritual nature.

This requires yielding—surrendering self-will, fear, and human outlining—to the pure activity of Christ within consciousness. It means responding to life’s demands not from habit or emotion but from the stillness of spiritual perception that goes beyond appearances and sees our brothers and sisters in their true, divine light. Then we find that we forgive before there’s been an apology; we love even when it seems undeserved; we see and prove the presence of health where the world sees only sickness. It is standing on the rock, Christ, and knowing the unbreakable continuity of good.

This practice is not abstract or removed from modern life. It is approaching any ordinary moment from the sanctity of spiritual perception. And doing so not only gives us a settled sense of peace but helps others feel and experience the touch of the Christ. And the opposite is also true: If we resist our practice or find it depleted or feeble, can we truly expect to help others embrace the glory of spiritual Life, God? We must feel alive and on

fire with living God's love in our own hearts if we hope to impart this inspiration and healing to others.

The good news is that this fire never actually goes out, even if we haven't felt it for a while. And although human effort is not what's needed to revive it, we can start simply. Everyday actions such as washing the dishes, listening to a child, or navigating conflict at work can become sacred opportunities to practice proving the presence of God. Divine Love becomes the center of identity and activity. We prove, then, that Christianity is not a creed but a way of being—it is being an unselfed transparency through which the light of Truth naturally shines and blesses everyone it touches.

I once got a call from a friend as I was preparing to conduct my branch church's weekly service. Ideas I'd been inspired by all morning were naturally shared throughout the conversation. A week later, she wrote to say she'd been healed of something she hadn't mentioned on the phone, something I didn't even know she'd been dealing with.

As we daily commit to and practice what we understand of God, this brings us opportunities to give of our "heart's rich overflow" (Minnie M. H. Ayers, *Christian Science Hymnal*, Hymn 139). The blessings we receive radiate outward to reach far beyond just helping ourselves—they give evidence of the divine Love that flows out to help and heal all.

**Larissa Snorek, Associate Editor**

## Going "from point A to point B"?

*If we start with God and stay with God, we are always at point A.*

*Heather Bauer*

**Throughout our day**, and even during key events in our lives, many of us often feel as though we are simply moving from point A to point B. From "here" to "there." It can be something simple, such as going from one room to another, or the daily task of running errands. Or it can be something much larger—maybe thinking about where we are and where we're going in life or where we'd like to be in terms of our job, relationship status, and health. The thought is, "Once I get from here to there, *then* I will feel at peace." Or "Once I get past this or that issue, *then* all will be well." In other words, once I move from point A to point B, everything will be fine.

Recently, I read an article that stated how much time people spend thinking about their future—and worrying about whether they will be successful when they get there. It reminded me of a time years ago when I was a new mother traveling with my two-year-old son, Peter, on a trip to China. My husband had to leave a few days ahead of us, and I wasn't seasoned at traveling alone with a child. I was praying, knowing that God was with me every moment and that it was impossible for me to be alone. The final verse of the Bible's Psalm 23 says, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (verse 6), and Mary Baker Eddy shares her spiritual sense of that line in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: ". . . I will dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [love] for ever" (p. 578).

In getting ready for the flight, I needed to remove any doubt that I could do it. I established in thought that my home, including the peace I should be able to experience there, was in reality my consciousness of God. No matter where we are physically, we are always dwelling in consciousness—always in our spiritual home.

As the long flight began, we were happily settled in. But when nighttime came, Peter had been sitting in his seat for many hours, and you could tell he wanted to get up and stretch. But at that point, there was turbulence, so we were told to remain seated. The flight attendant was taking such good care of us, but there I was with a wriggling toddler on my lap, one leg falling asleep, and discomfort in my back and side. On top of that, the man sitting next to us did not look happy.

As I could not get up and go somewhere and could not call a Christian Science practitioner to ask for treatment through prayer, right there in my seat I was facing several challenges, feeling uncomfortable on so many levels, and turning wholeheartedly to God. Even with all my prayer, however, at one point I felt ready to cry. But just then, the captain turned off the “fasten seat belts” sign, which freed passengers to move around the cabin.

As my son and I were walking along the aisle, I saw that there were other families with children—many folks on their way to who knows where. And I thought, Oh my goodness, here I was so focused on my own discomfort.

It was as if a curtain had been lifted in my thought. As we walked the aisle, I felt God’s complete control and recognized that navigating through life was less about me and more about God. *Science and Health* states, “Divine Science rolls back the clouds of error with the light of Truth, and lifts the curtain on man as never born and as never dying, but as coexistent with his creator” (p. 557). Ah. So it wasn’t a matter of going from Point A to Point B. We are actually always at Point A!

I realized that I had been buried in logistics, in planning every step of the trip—from the car to the airport, from check-in and security to the gate, from the flight to the hotel—always thinking, “Once we get to my husband, *then* we will be settled.” And even though I had been praying before the trip, I had been leaning very much on human reasoning instead of on God, the sustaining infinite. Yes, it is right to be organized—the Apostle Paul counsels us, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:40)—but divine Love wasn’t going to leave me with the wrong thought of travel, motherhood, or getting from here to there.

Wisdom, intelligence, health, strength, and movement are all sourced in God. Every step we take is *in* God, and every person on that plane—the pilot, the flight attendants, the other passengers with and without children, and my son and I—were held perpetually in God’s care.

I was so grateful to have gained this clarity. Just then, the overhead lights were dimmed to support those who wanted to sleep. The man sitting beside us, who was from China, scooted over a bit, took my son’s little legs, and placed them on his armrest so that Peter could stretch out. It was so unexpected and such a loving gesture. In the morning, we thanked him in our best Chinese (*xiè xie*). And what was so sweet about that night on the plane was that all of the little ones were absolutely quiet—no crying or fussing during the night. Also, the discomfort in my leg, back, and side completely dissolved. With gratitude, I thought of these words from the *Christian Science Hymnal*:

He knows the angels that you need,  
And sends them to your side,  
To comfort, guard and guide.

(Violet Hay, No. 9, © CSBD)

This experience has come to thought often over the years, and always brings tears of gratitude. I’m grateful not only for the kindness, thoughtfulness, and love expressed on the plane but also for the growth in my trust in God. It is so helpful to take a moment—wherever we’re going, whatever we’re planning or doing, and even whatever we’re thinking that we want in life—to establish in our thought that God is All, ever present, ever available, and always giving us angel messages of wisdom and love.

As we go about our days, seemingly moving “from point A to point B” in every task and interaction, if we start with God and stay with God, we are always at point A. I can think of so many times when I have prayed with that very thought—for my children in their travels and schooling as well as for myself in my own travels, business, banking, search for the right home for my mother, and even grocery shopping.

In the Bible, it's written that "in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). Each and every one of us can feel the omnipresence of God and be fearless and confident when we are guided by God.

As we navigate through our days, how healing it is to know that we are not moving "from point A to point B," but that in Truth, God, every step of the way is point A.

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## IMAGE AND INSPIRATION

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# Young Yellow-crowned Night Heron

*Photograph by Scott Cummins*

*What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

—Mark 13:37

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# Overcoming doomscrolling—online and in our thinking

*Susan Angle Damone*

Originally published online October 10, 2025.&nbsp;

**On a recent evening**, I wanted to take time to pray about some event in the news that needed attention. This is something I've done for many years. I believe in the power of prayer—of turning to God for answers. I have also been the recipient of the loving prayers of devoted friends and Christian Science practitioners and have always felt uplifted by this support.

I tried to select a single subject for this time of devotion. There were so many possibilities: geopolitical conflicts, climate issues, social injustices, and governments troubled by malfeasance, to name just a few. This review of humanity's needs started to seem overwhelming, and before long I recognized that my thoughts had fallen into a pattern of doomsday scrolling. Doomscrolling, as it's more commonly known, refers to obsessively scrolling through social media or the news, expecting and sometimes seeking out information that makes us feel sad, anxious, angry, etc. Even though I was not looking at or reading the news at that moment, a review of the events of the day seemed like a horror film playing in my mind. In fact, I was mentally scrolling instead of turning to God!

Doomscrolling can feel justified. People feel enticed by it and can be tricked into constantly tracking negative news or social media, in the hope that they will be better informed, more able to defend a position, or even become better citizens. But this is based on a faulty premise. While it's important to stay up to date on the news, the need is first to establish our own peace of mind by affirming what's spiritually true, and then we will be prepared to help the world by seeing how that applies to what is being reported and discussed.

Mary Baker Eddy included the following By-Law in the *Manual of The Mother Church*, "It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to defend himself daily against aggressive mental suggestion, and not be made to forget nor to neglect his duty to God, to his Leader, and to mankind" (p. 42). The impulse to doomscroll can put us in the position of believing the "aggressive mental suggestion" that chaos is inevitable. But a statement from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mrs. Eddy helps me conquer this feeling: "Your influence for good depends upon the weight you throw into the right scale" (p. 192).

Intuitively, I knew that I needed to guard my thoughts and keep them from being pulled into a downward-spiraling vortex of hopelessness. I mentally hit the brakes and decided that a different approach was needed. Almost immediately, a calm, refreshing thought surfaced: What is *God* thinking? I knew that this was the appropriate basis for praying for the world.

I started by pondering God's supremacy and trusting that there were answers. God knows His creation only as He created it: perfect, pure, and very good, according to Genesis 1 in the Bible. This is the only reality, despite any appearance to the contrary. Anything suggesting that God, good, is not All is a false claim that God is not the only creator.

I knew that as I remembered what was absolutely true, answers would come into focus. I needed to acknowledge the allness of God and the forever presence of Christ, Truth. Jesus came to show us through his ministry how to heal, and Christ is the spiritual idea that he fully embodied. *Science and Health* defines the timeless Christ as "the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error" (p. 583).

A friend once told me that it was advisable to keep this balance when praying: We should take a single look at the problem for every ten looks at the Christ, as Mrs. Eddy once indicated to an early worker in the Christian Science movement (see William P. McKenzie, "The uplifted ideal," *The Christian Science Journal*, September 1904). Although not a formula, this 10-to-1 ratio highlights the importance of emphasizing the healing power and presence of the Christ instead of becoming preoccupied with any problem.

The Apostle Paul reminded Christ's followers of their firm grounding and safety in Truth when he wrote, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 37-39). Was Paul downplaying the troubles of Christ's followers? Not at all; he was counseling them to turn to God in all of those troubles.

Paul also offers this encouraging counsel about how to turn to God: "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of

whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:14-15).

Empowered by these thoughts, I was very happy to pray with favorite scriptural quotes. I felt certain that our prayers for humanity are purified and bolstered by being firmly grounded in the Scriptures. The mental doomscrolling gave way to peace and an assurance that God would provide the needed wisdom to move us all forward.

This led me to recall another instance years ago of what, in hindsight, I'd call domestic doomscrolling. When I was going through a divorce, I found myself mentally replaying unhappy events. Through prayer, I realized that the reiteration of such events was not beneficial in any way and that, as if watching a TV drama, I could change the channel. I could choose to put God first in my thoughts. This prioritization brought me great freedom and gradual progress toward a naturally joy-filled life.

Am I 100 percent successful at avoiding doomscrolling? No. It can take dedicated prayer to avoid getting wrapped up in the mesmeric appearance of the reality and activity of evil and to sincerely stay with Truth in order to bring healing. But persistently working to improve at this practice has been and continues to be strengthening and transformative.

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## Serving God no matter what

*God needs me—and you—to serve Him right now, regardless of our history or present circumstances.*

*Elizabeth Ragsdale*

**Sometimes we find** ourselves in such dire straits that it seems impossible to imagine doing anything but just hanging on as best we can. But how can we actually

use these times to serve God and our fellow man right where we are and to progress in our spiritual growth?

The story of Joseph in the Hebrew Scriptures has much to teach us about serving God when the going gets tough. The favorite son of his father, Joseph incurred the envy of his brothers, was sold by them into slavery, and was later imprisoned for a crime he had not committed. Yet he eventually overcame these challenges by being grounded in humility. He dealt with each situation, no matter how unjust, and performed every task, no matter how menial, with diligence and integrity. He at all times worked for the glory of God, exemplifying guidance that would appear in the Bible thousands of years later: “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23).

An Egyptian master to whom Joseph had been sold “saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand” (Genesis 39:3) and put Joseph in charge of his entire household.

*Prosper* comes from the Hebrew word *tsalach*, which can also be rendered *advance*, *succeed*, or *thrive*—“to push forward” (see biblehub.com). Yet Joseph’s prosperity was never about material gain. Rather, he advanced in his work by staying close to God and doing his work well, even when unjustly thrown into prison. While there, Joseph used his keen spiritual insight to interpret the dreams of two fellow prisoners—which led to an opportunity to explain the meaning of a dream that was troubling the king of Egypt.

Joseph explained to Pharaoh that his dream was a warning that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. In gratitude, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of stockpiling food while the harvests were good and distributing it when the famine began. As the famine spread, Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt to buy food. Without a trace of ill will, Joseph forgave them for their sins against him, assuring them that it was God who had put him in a position to save many lives.

During his long years of trial, Joseph had appeared to be serving human masters, but he was actually always serving God, with humility and grace. And we too

can prosper, even in the most difficult situations, by choosing to stay close to God. We do this by holding fast to the truth that, as God’s offspring, created in His image and likeness, we can never be separated from His goodness. When we understand that God is our true employer, it is a joy to serve. Instead of focusing on our circumstances or the steps involved in a task, we can ask God what qualities are most needed for success. Practicing these qualities, all of which God expresses abundantly in each one of us, is a way of glorifying Him.

Like Joseph, we are all being put in a position to bless. When wronged by others, we can choose not to be held captive by bitterness, but instead turn our attention to doing God’s will.

I had a harsh experience years ago that gave me much practice and satisfaction in serving God while preparing me for a new career. After losing my employment and housing, I moved into a building where I was surrounded by poverty, mental illness, and violence. Despite the drama all around me, having the freedom to engage in long periods of prayer allowed me to lead a quiet, orderly life. The opinions of others did not deter me from remaining in an environment that they viewed as hostile, but that was in fact meeting my deep need for spiritual growth.

Separated from friends and family, I recognized what a precious opportunity I had been given to be alone with God. Somewhat new to Christian Science, I spent countless hours in a Christian Science Reading Room studying the Bible along with *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Mrs. Eddy describes withdrawing from society for three years while searching the Scriptures to discover the rules of Christian healing—to learn how Jesus healed. She writes, “The search was sweet, calm, and buoyant with hope, not selfish nor depressing” (p. 109).

As it turned out, I was also withdrawn from society for three years, and it’s a period that I remember with a similar fondness. I spent time searching the Bible and *Science and Health* for guidance and support in taking my next steps in serving God. Early on, I found myself with a nearly empty bank account and no job prospects. As often happens when one is forced to rely fully on God,



my fear was transformed into freedom as I realized that material things could never be the source of my security or happiness. With God taking care of every detail, I was soon offered a temporary assignment that provided a weekly paycheck.

Though I had few marketable skills after leaving a teaching career, I discovered inexpensive, conveniently located vocational classes. Deeply engaged in new avenues of learning, both academically and spiritually, I had no time for bitterness or self-pity.

At first, the temporary work demanded little of me, but as I strove to perform every task well, opportunities opened up for me to use more of my skills. I was learning to serve God, my true employer, and was deeply grateful to be given greater responsibilities. Instead of outlining my next steps, I knew I could trust God's plan for progress, as a much-loved hymn assures us:

No eye hath seen, nor tongue declared,  
Nor hath it entered heart of man,  
To know what God hath here prepared  
For them that love and trust His plan.

(Elizabeth C. Adams, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 188, © CSBD)

The culmination of this holy experience was Christian Science class instruction (a two-week course in healing through prayer), reconnection with my family, a fresh start in another city, and the launch of an even more fulfilling career than I could have imagined. Now, several decades later, I'm still serving God and growing spiritually.

God needs me—and you—to serve Him right now, regardless of our history or present circumstances. He is revealing our next steps for humbly and joyfully serving in ways that are a blessing to all.

## Struggling to write a college essay?

*Ashley Packard*

Originally appeared online in the teen series *Your Healings* -&nbsp;October 21, 2025.

**It was college application** time. Though many described the process as grueling and exhausting, I saw it as an opportunity to share my experiences with Christian Science, deepen my understanding of myself, and bless each reader through my writing.

At first, the process was relatively smooth: fine-tuning personal statements, curating my story, researching schools, and speaking with alumni. I didn't really encounter difficulty until I reached the final of four supplemental essays for one school. I had rewritten this essay multiple times, but nothing stood out. The message felt flat, misaligned with what I truly wanted to say.

Then, inspiration struck. I realized I had been approaching the essay the wrong way. Instead of trying to showcase myself, I needed to highlight God's wonderful works in my life. My role was not to impress, but to express—to reflect God, Mind, in every word. I knew that turning to God meant there could be no misstep. Trusting in Him, I leaned into the understanding that nothing bad could come from sincerely sharing God's love with the world.

With that realization, I ran to my room, stepped into my closet, and shut the door—taking to heart this verse: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6).

I sat in silence for a few minutes, praying, as I listened for whatever God had for me to hear.



Soon, an idea came to me. I knew instantly this was from God. That same week in Christian Science Sunday School, we had talked about light: how darkness is merely the absence of light, and how light fills all space. Inspired by the verse, “For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness” (Psalms 18:28), I began writing.

What started as a dull, directionless essay transformed into a letter of gratitude to God. I wrote about how the light of divine Love, illuminating my life, had propelled me to share love with peers, teachers, mentors, coaches, and employers. I wrote from a place of sincere thankfulness, recognizing the tangible changes God had made in my life—changes that even made it possible for me to be applying to college.

I finished the essay and submitted it with my mom at my side. I was filled with a deep feeling of peace. I understood then that true inspiration blesses not just the writer, but every one of God’s children who encounters it.

About four months later, I had heard back from most of the schools—some acceptances, some rejections. Still, I trusted God and didn’t try to define where my “right place” was; I knew that was for God to reveal.

Then came decision day for the school I had written my gratitude letter for. I expected a rejection, but kept praying—knowing that whatever happened was God-directed.

When I opened the letter, joyful tears filled my eyes. I had been accepted.

But the depth of my gratitude didn’t fully hit me until I’d received the school’s welcome package. Right on top was my acceptance letter, a flag, and a sticker that read: “Let there be light.”

In that moment, I felt God’s love around me—so full and so tender. I knew, without a doubt, that this was where I was meant to be.

Today, I’m a student at that very school, and I continue to give thanks for the divine guidance that led me here.

I know even more clearly now that each day is a new opportunity to express God’s goodness and to reflect His light to others.

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## HEALINGS

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# Liberated from pain and despair

*Scott Konecni*

**Throughout most of** my life, I have been an avid weightlifter and dedicated athlete. One day I had a bad fall, damaging my right shoulder. There was very intense pain. As a Christian Scientist, I’d had many healings through prayer, and I prayed for myself this time, too. When I didn’t get relief, I decided to see a doctor. He diagnosed a torn rotator cuff and advised surgery as the only solution. I eventually followed through with the recommended surgery.

I recovered and started weightlifting again—until one day I again injured the same shoulder. This time, in addition to being in pain, I was extremely fearful that I had re-torn my rotator cuff and would have to undergo another surgery. The darkness of fear and anxiety overshadowed any hopeful, pure thoughts of my completely spiritual identity as a child of God. I also didn’t feel I had given claiming my true identity in prayer an honest effort after the initial injury. I now felt trapped in an imprisoning mental state.

Then one day when the pain was shouting at me with all its seeming might, I responded verbally, “Peace. Be quiet.” The pain left immediately.

The relief was instantaneous. But I wanted to be completely free of the problem, so I chose to dive deeper into my study of Christian Science to understand how that change had happened. I thought about a time when Jesus calmed a storm (see Mark 4:35–39). The storm threatened the boat that Jesus and his disciples were in,

and the waves were so fierce that the disciples feared that their lives were at stake.

At that moment, what was Jesus doing? Sleeping near the back of the boat, unimpressed and unafraid. When they woke Jesus up, the disciples asked him if he cared that they were about to die. Jesus very calmly said to the wind and the waves, “Peace, be still,” and the storm was over. With his solid understanding of the allness of Truth, God, he compassionately proved that peace is always the reality, exposing the unreality of their fear and quieting the storm.

Later, when pain in my shoulder again suggested that the tendon was torn, I thought to myself, “You are not a victim of this pain. You have God-given dominion. Stop feeling sorry for yourself.” It was then that I realized that I was struggling with mental slavery—that servitude to a false belief was at the root of this challenge.

I began to pray, but I didn’t start with the problem; I started with the solution, opening *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy to this passage in the chapter “Footsteps of Truth”: “Truth brings the elements of liberty. On its banner is the Soul-inspired motto, ‘Slavery is abolished.’ The power of God brings deliverance to the captive. No power can withstand divine Love. What is this supposed power, which opposes itself to God? Whence cometh it? What is it that binds man with iron shackles to sin, sickness, and death? Whatever enslaves man is opposed to the divine government. Truth makes man free” (pp. 224–225).

This spoke directly to me and my seemingly real physical challenge. It was exactly what I needed to hear. And at that moment, I realized I had been completely healed, both mentally and physically.

As time progressed, I realized that healing the belief of mental slavery had led to numerous other healings, including a greatly improved sense of compassion. I’m more compassionate with myself and others as I acknowledge the truth of harmonious being, as Jesus did when he calmed the storm. As I pondered this experience, I realized that I had naturally and beautifully taken a clear step in transitioning from

the mistaken sense of being material and mortal to an understanding of myself as the spiritual, pure, and complete creation of God, Spirit.

I still love weightlifting and physical fitness, but there is a fresh light that now shines brighter in my life. I now better understand this statement from *Science and Health*: “Love for God and man is the true incentive in both healing and teaching. Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way. Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action” (p. 454).

The pathway to freedom is not easy. There may seem to be obstacles along the way, but realizing that God, infinite Love, is “a very present help” (Psalms 46:1) uplifts our thought, and therefore our experience, into true happiness, peace, and liberty. As *Science and Health* says, “Love is the liberator” (p. 225).

**Scott Konecni**

*Belle Chasse, Louisiana, US*

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## Healed after a fall on rocky ground

*Jaska Alanko*

**Some years ago**, my wife and I took a holiday break in the Åland Islands, an archipelago in the Baltic Sea between Finland and Sweden. We had booked a cozy, secluded cottage at the end of a rocky headland with magnificent views of the sea, not to speak of peace and privacy.

From time to time, heavy rain would lash the rocks, making them slippery. The cottage had an outdoor toilet only, and the way to it wound along a rocky path. One dark and particularly wet evening, as I was returning to the cottage, I stumbled and slipped.

There I was, lying on wet granite in the darkness of night with heavy rain beating down. I was in shock. I felt

scared and helpless, beyond the reach of human help. My knees and thigh hurt badly.

I realized that the situation was serious and acute. But as a student of Christian Science, I knew that my help would come from on high—from the Almighty God. With all my heart, I reached out to the power of Father-Mother God for aid. I affirmed that in the kingdom of God there are no accidents because God governs His beloved creation in complete harmony. At that moment, God's loving presence felt so real and palpable, and I knew I was enveloped in it completely.

Then, quite suddenly, my heart was filled with the comforting thought that I was lying on a rock, and Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, defines *rock* metaphysically, in part, as “spiritual foundation; Truth” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 593). Could there be anything mightier than God, Truth? A spiritual foundation is more beautiful, immovable, solid, timeless, and dependable than even a gigantic mountain of granite.

In that moment, I spoke to my Rock, God, and He assured me of His presence and omnipotence right there. He is caring for each one of His beloved children every moment and in every way—He would never allow me to be harmed. The belief of having been in an accident was replaced by an unshakable sense of being firmly grounded on the rock of Truth. And because the Bible tells us we are the image of God and reflect His goodness (see Genesis 1:26, 27), I knew that in reality, I was always safe, good, and intact.

These words from a familiar hymn came to me as I praised God for His goodness from the bottom of my heart: “Rock of Ages, Truth divine,/Be Thy strength forever mine” (Frederick W. Root, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 293). I was grateful for God's all-loving care and protection, right there.

My fears melted away along with any mental replay of the fall, and I realized that the pain was completely gone. Thanking God for healing me immediately, I got up. Rain continued to pour down my face, but now, instead of feeling like a battering, it felt like the gentle touch of Love, washing away any memory of a fall.

I am so grateful for the ever-available help of God, the Rock we can trust and lean on. I also love how Mrs. Eddy writes about this foundation of Christ Jesus' teachings in her poem titled “Christ My Refuge” (*Poems*, p. 12):

Thus Truth engrounds me on the rock,  
Upon Life's shore,  
'Gainst which the winds and waves can shock,  
Oh, nevermore!

**Jaska Alanko**  
*Claygate, Surrey, England*

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## Healing of Covid

*Hernando Pico Niño*

Originally published in Spanish

**Five years ago**, I felt as though I had been born again. Like the biblical patriarch Jacob, my life was preserved, and I became new.

The circumstance that precipitated this spiritual rebirth occurred when my relatives were celebrating the Christmas holiday with me. I was experiencing some symptoms of illness, and my youngest daughter, who was about to graduate university as a medical nurse, suspected they were related to Covid.

She immediately made an appointment for me at the Ministry of Public Health to be tested for the virus. I tested positive. In accordance with the laws in my country, I remained in isolation at home with my wife and two children.

With the expectation of healing, I asked a Christian Science practitioner for metaphysical treatment. I have been a Christian Scientist for more than 27 years and have had many healings as a result of prayer, so I had reason to trust God as my only physician. I did not seek medical treatment. I remembered the many times, through turning to God as taught in Christian Science,

that I had overcome challenging health, relationship, and economic issues, so my confidence in God was very strong.

The practitioner shared with me many passages from the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Her daily prayer and encouragement were a great support and strengthened me spiritually. I began to feel my unity with God and that *nothing* could separate me from Him and the health and goodness He imparts.

In the time that followed, the symptoms were aggressive, but I persisted in prayer. I took advantage of the periods when I had relief to pray and study the Bible and the writings of Mrs. Eddy.

Among the many helpful passages was the following from the Bible: “Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:22–24). Though I had read this passage many times over the years, I realized that I was identifying myself as a struggling mortal, and I needed a better sense of my real, spiritual selfhood, which is free from disease and the limitations of matter. In other words, the great need was to awaken to the truth that I am entirely spiritual—we all are—made in God’s likeness, for this understanding gives us dominion over the belief of sickness.

The turning point was when I yielded up any personal sense of responsibility for healing. Christ Jesus, the greatest healer the world has known, said, “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30), and acknowledged that his heavenly Father “doeth the works” (John 14:10). The Apostle Paul, explaining how he was able to heal and to overcome severe trials and temptations, explained, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

Christ, as defined in Christian Science, is the eternal, divine Truth that Jesus lived and practiced; Christ is “the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error” (*Science and Health*, p.

583). I felt the Christ, Truth, illumine my consciousness and chase away the errors of fear and sickness.

Steadily, I began to regain my strength. My breathing became normal, and my appetite returned. Eventually, I fully returned to all of my physical activities, including my favorite sports. I have remained completely free ever since that time.

This experience makes me think of these words: “When we wake to the truth of being, all disease, pain, weakness, weariness, sorrow, sin, death, will be unknown, and the mortal dream will forever cease” (*Science and Health*, pp. 218–219). I am infinitely grateful to God for the practice of Christian Science and for this healing that brought me out of darkness into the light.

**Hernando Pico Niño**

*Bogota, Colombia*

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## POEM

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# Love’s transparency

*Penny Swank*

From deep within my heart I pray,  
O Spirit, rest on me.  
A stillness, an abiding peace,  
unfolds so tenderly.

I wait expectant, humbly watch.  
You show me what is true:  
a pure, untroubled quietness,  
my thoughts reflecting You.

There’s no regret, no cumbered past,  
no mortal life divided—  
secure in Love’s foreverhood,  
one Life, one Us, united.

Here Your living waters keep me  
safe, unharmed, and clear.

Such faithfulness unfailing!  
I pray to do Your will.

I seek no life apart from You.  
With face unveiled, I see  
perfect God, perfect man,  
“through Love’s transparency.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 330.

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## BIBLE LENS

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# God the Only Cause and Creator

## *From the Responsive Reading*

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### Genesis 1:3, 11

*God said, Let there be light: and there was light.... And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

Vegetation in this account (from simple grass to seed-bearing plants to fruit trees) is shown to be fully mature at its inception. A scholar explains that these forms “were not the product of the powers of nature, . . . but a work of divine omnipotence, by which the trees came into existence before their seed, and their fruit was produced in full development, without expanding gradually under the influence of sunshine and rain.”

“After his/their kind”—repeated ten times in this chapter—illustrates the “like produces like” principle, expressing the universal order of creation.

### Luke 8:5–8, 11–15

*A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; . . . And some fell upon a rock; . . . And some fell among thorns; . . . And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. . . . Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*

Christ Jesus offers this parable to a large crowd early in his ministry. Familiar with farming methods, his listeners would have known that not every seed sown takes root and bears fruit. In the rocky terrain of Palestine, some grains inevitably ended up in soil that could not sustain them.

Even with well-placed seeds, a hundredfold yield from those growing in good soil was likely thought remarkable, if not miraculous. Most yields averaged about ten times the weight of the original seeds, though Genesis 26:12 records a hundredfold harvest for Isaac.

The Master concludes with a strong assurance: Workers who embrace the qualities needed to receive and nurture the seed of God’s Word will be fruitful.

## *From Section 1*

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### 1 | Psalms 127:1

*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*

#### Translation

*Unless it is the LORD who builds the house,  
the builders’ work is pointless.*

—Common English Bible

### 2 | I Corinthians 16:21

*The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.*

While Paul is assumed to have dictated many of his letters, he has apparently signed this epistle—perhaps to provide authentication or include a personal greeting.

### 3 | I Corinthians 3:6–13, 16

*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. . . . Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Up to this point, Paul has worked extensively to establish the message of Christ in Corinth. When a devout and well-educated Jew named Apollos also starts preaching there, some believers begin promoting one over the other. Paul rejects this rift, affirming that unity springs from God as husbandman and builder of all.

*Husbandry* denotes the cultivation of a field. As crops do not cultivate themselves but are tended by farmers to produce plentiful harvests, so God's care for His people—"the planting of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:3)—brings forth productive lives.

To this image Paul adds a construction metaphor, emphasizing that Jesus (depicted as the cornerstone in Acts 4:11 and Ephesians 2:20) is the foundation for all spiritual building.

### 4 | Amos 4:13

*He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the*

*morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name.*

#### Translation

*The LORD is the one who shaped the mountains,  
stirs up the winds, and reveals his thoughts to  
mankind.*

*He turns the light of dawn into darkness  
and treads on the heights of the earth.*

*The LORD God of Heaven's Armies is his name!*

—New Living Translation

## From Section 2

### 6 | John 5:17, 19, 20, 30

*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

Jesus has recently cured an invalid at the pool of Bethesda (see vv. 1–9). Since this happened on a Sabbath, it was judged an infraction of Hebrew law (see v. 16). To the Jews targeting Jesus, rigorous interpretation of Sabbath requirements takes precedence over the mercy and compassion expressed in the Savior's healing. In response, Jesus shifts the discussion from earthly to spiritual concerns.

*Hitherto* (translated from the Greek phrase *heōs arti*) implies continuation, referring to God's unceasing activity and might. His audience would have agreed that God supports His creation, but not that any person could work as God did. Here Jesus unequivocally proclaims his divine authority—and willing submission to God—as His Son. The Master's obedience to his Father, one source observes, "is not based on submission to power; it is based on love. This unity between Jesus and God is a unity of love."

### 8 | Luke 9:1, 2



*Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*

*Dynamis* (the Greek term rendered *power*) is the capacity to act with power; *exousia* (*authority*) is the right to act with power. Up to this point, Jesus' disciples have been witnesses of his works and students of his teachings. Now he deems them ready to spread the gospel through their own preaching and healing—and authorizes them to take on this dual role.

#### 9 | **Luke 10:1, 17–20**

*After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. . . . And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

Jesus' victorious exclamation in verse 18 echoes this resounding Hebrew Bible prophecy: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12). And mentions of writing in heaven or in the "book of life" appear elsewhere in Scripture (see instances in Hebrews 12:22, 23; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 21:27).

### *From Section 3*

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#### 11 | **Matthew 17:14–16, 18–21**

*There came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. . . . And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,*

*ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

In the ancient Near East, afflictions similar to this one were attributed to the phases of the moon (Latin, *luna*)—resulting in the derogatory terms *lunatic* and *moonstruck*. This condition, also identified as a spirit in Luke 9:39, is today thought by some to have been epilepsy. The Savior's rebuke of the demon and subsequent healing of the boy correct both the crowd's opinions and the disciples' inability to effect a cure.

#### 12 | **II Corinthians 10:3–5**

*Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

#### **Translation**

*Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

—NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®

### *From Section 4*

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#### 13 | **Psalms 100:3**

*Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.*

#### **Translation**

*Realize that the LORD alone is God.  
He made us, and we are his.*

—GOD'S WORD® Translation

#### 14 | **Acts 8:5–9, 12–15, 18–21, 23, 24**



Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: . . . But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: . . . Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: . . . And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. . . . For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Philip the Evangelist (distinct from Jesus' disciple) was one of seven assistants to the apostles after the Master's ascension (see 6:1–5). He was instrumental in expanding Christianity beyond Jerusalem to Samaria—as well as to Caesarea Maritima, where he took up residence (see 8:26–40; 21:8).

At a period when magic was considered the way to access and manipulate supernatural forces, Simon has attracted widespread attention. Impressed by Philip's works, he undergoes baptism. But his attempt to buy spiritual power shows little understanding of its source and incurs Peter's sharp censure. (The sorcerer Simon's name is the origin of the word *simony*, the practice of making monetary profit from something sacred.)

15 | **John 3:21**

*He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

#### **Translation**

*“Whoever practices truth [and does what is right—morally, ethically, spiritually] comes to the Light, so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are—accomplished in God [divinely prompted, done with God's help, in dependence on Him].”*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

### **From Section 5**

16 | **Ephesians 5:1, 10, 11, 13**

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; . . . Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. . . . All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.*

#### **Translation**

*You are the children that God dearly loves. So follow his example. . . . Find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the acts of darkness. They don't produce anything good. Show what they are really like. . . . But everything the light shines on can be seen. And everything that the light shines on becomes a light.*

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

17 | **Ephesians 2:10**

*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

## Translation

*We are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

Good works, this author declares, result not from our own efforts but from God's work in us—His workmanship. A commentary remarks: “. . . believers are saved *for* or *unto* good works, not *by* or *because of* them. Good works are the outcome, not the cause, of salvation.”

## From Section 6

### 18 | Revelation 12:1

*There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*

The book of Revelation is an apocalypse—a text that predicts great upheaval leading to the end of evil. *Apocalypse* is derived from the Greek term *apokalypsis*, meaning unveiling or revealing—thus the book's title.

Apocalyptic writing, frequently arising in times of crisis, employed images and symbols in its message of hope (see Daniel, chaps. 7–12, for example). In the New Testament, Jesus foretells apocalyptic events (see Matthew 24:4–51; Mark 13:5–37; Luke 21:8–33) and the destruction of evil (see John 12:31).

*Wonder* is translated from the Greek noun *sēmeion*—a recurring word in the New Testament (most often rendered *sign* or *miracle*). One scholar calls the metaphors in this passage “the language of prophetic assurance.”

### 19 | Isaiah 62:11

*The Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*

## Translation

*The LORD has announced a message  
from one end of the earth to the other.  
He has said, “Tell the people of Zion,  
‘Look! Your Savior is coming!  
He is bringing his people back as his reward.  
He has won the battle over their enemies.’”*

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

### 20 | II Corinthians 2:14

*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

## Translation

*I thank God, who always leads us in victory because of Christ. Wherever we go, God uses us to make clear what it means to know Christ. It's like a fragrance that fills the air.*

—GOD'S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

Read a related article, “A mustard seed of faith” by Nan B. Fitz-Patrick.

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# God the Preserver of Man

## From the Responsive Reading

### Isaiah 54:11, 13

*O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. . . . And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.*

Jerusalem had been destroyed during the Babylonian invasion. For beleaguered Jewish exiles, this prophecy was intended to comfort and inspire: God would rebuild the city, making it even more beautiful than before its ruin. Descriptions of specific gems suggest a fully realized restoration—imagery reprised centuries later by John of Patmos (see Revelation 21:18–21).

Christ Jesus cites verse 13 in response to opponents: “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45).

To be “taught of the Lord” also recalls Jeremiah’s oracle: “They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:34).

## From Section 1

### 1 | 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.*

#### Translation

*Long ago the LORD said to Israel:*

*“I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love.  
With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.”*

—New Living Translation

### 4 | Psalms 121:8

*The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*

## Translation

*The Lord will guard you as you come and go,  
both now and forever.*

—International Children’s Bible®

### 5 | Isaiah 32:2

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

After warning against relying on an alliance with Egypt to defend against Assyria (see 31:1, 3), Isaiah now portrays the wise ruler who looks to God for protection. Four similes illustrate God’s qualities: hiding place, covert, rivers of water, and shadow of a great rock—each one a symbol of safety and shelter in periods of danger.

## From Section 2

### 6 | Psalms 16:1, 11

*Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. . . . Thou wilt  
shew me the path of life.*

## Translation

*Protect me, God,  
because I trust in you.*

. . . . .

*You will teach me how to live a holy life.*

—New Century Version®

### 7 | Genesis 6:9, 13, 14, 19

*Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah  
walked with God. . . . And God said unto Noah, The end of all  
flesh is come before me; . . . Make thee an ark of gopher wood;  
rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and  
without with pitch. . . . And of every living thing of all flesh, two  
of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with  
thee; they shall be male and female.*

Noah has been celebrated over the millennia for his virtuous character. In the New Testament, Hebrews

11:7 records his faith, and II Peter 2:5 recognizes him as “a preacher of righteousness.” His family members later repopulate the earth and become ancestors of the patriarch Abraham.

The Hebrew term *tēbā*, meaning ark or box, occurs in the Bible only to signify Noah’s vessel and the basket that hid the baby Moses (see Exodus 2:3). A different word (<sup>a</sup>*rôn*) denotes the ark of the covenant, the sacred chest that held the Ten Commandments.

### 9 | Genesis 8:1, 18, 19

*God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle  
that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over  
the earth, and the waters assuaged; . . . And Noah went forth, and  
his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him: every beast,  
every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth  
upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.*

God’s remembering Noah doesn’t imply that He had forgotten His devoted servant. The Hebrew verb meaning *remember* (*zākar*) also suggests attention and mindfulness (see other examples in 19:29; 30:22; Exodus 2:24). And a psalmist asks, “What is man, that thou art mindful [*zākar*] of him?” (Psalms 8:4, citation 3).

*Rû<sup>a</sup>h*, the noun rendered *wind* here, signifies breath or spirit as well. It recurs throughout Scripture to express spiritual power and presence—most notably in the moving of the spirit of God “upon the face of the waters” in Genesis 1:2.

### 10 | Psalms 36:6

*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are  
a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.*

## Translation

*Your decisions are always fair.  
They are firm like mountains,  
deep like the sea,  
and all people and animals  
are under your care.*

—Contemporary English Version

## From Section 3

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### 11 | Isaiah 59:19

*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.*

#### Translation

*The LORD will come like a rushing river that was held back.*

*His breath will drive it along.*

—New International Reader's Version™

To many translators, “flood” actually depicts God’s saving activity (rather than an enemy’s attack) in this prophecy. And according to some sources, the words rendered “lift up a standard against” signify “drive away” or “put to flight.” One has, “God the warrior [sweeps] over vast regions like a torrential river. . . .”

### 12 | Psalms 62:5–7

*My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.*

#### Translation

*Only God gives inward peace,  
and I depend on him.*

*God alone is the mighty rock  
that keeps me safe,  
and he is the fortress  
where I feel secure.*

*God saves me and honors me.  
He is that mighty rock  
where I find safety.*

—Contemporary English Version

Biblical poets frequently addressed their inner being as “my soul,” using this wording to give themselves instruction and reminders (see more examples in 42:5; 103:1, 2; 116:7).

Virtually repeating verses 1 and 2, this passage emphasizes that the roles of deliverer and defender are exclusive to God. Scottish theologian James Moffatt

offers, “Leave it all quietly to God, my soul, my rescue comes from him alone; . . .”

### 16 | Ephesians 3:14, 17–19

*I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

#### Translation

*I bow in prayer before the Father. . . . I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. And I pray that you and all God’s holy people will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ’s love. I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. Christ’s love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.*

—International Children’s Bible®

## From Section 4

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### 17 | II Corinthians 1:2, 21, 22

*Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

#### Translation

*May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. . . . It is God himself who makes us, together with you, sure of our life in union with Christ; it is God himself who has set us apart, who has placed his mark of ownership upon us, and who has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the guarantee of all that he has in store for us.*

—Good News Translation

Just as today, seals were employed in ancient times to show proof of ownership, origin, and quality—as



well as to ensure privacy and finality. In this text, Paul chooses the metaphor of a seal to convey confidence that God perpetually identifies and preserves followers of Christ. (See additional examples in John 6:27; I Corinthians 9:2; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.)

“The earnest of the Spirit” uses another commercial term—the payment of an installment as a guarantee of a larger amount. A commentator explains, “The Holy Spirit is a guarantee, the down payment that there is more spiritual blessing to come. . . .”

## 18 | John 3:6, 8

*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

### Translation

*“Flesh and blood give birth to flesh and blood, but the Spirit gives birth to things that are spiritual. . . . The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you don’t know where the wind comes from or where it’s going. That’s the way it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”*

—GOD’S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

## From Section 5

### 22 | Romans 12:10, 12, 18, 21

*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; . . . rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; . . . If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. . . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

### Translation

*Be devoted to each other like a loving family. Excel in showing respect for each other. . . . Be happy in your confidence, be patient in trouble, and pray continually. . . . As much as it is possible, live in peace with everyone. . . . Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil with good.*

—GOD’S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

Early writers often used a catalog of moral and spiritual exhortations to summarize their teachings. In this chapter, Paul includes behaviors expected of the faithful. He strengthens his message with references to statements from both Jesus and Hebrew Scripture.

*Kindly affectioned* is translated from the Greek adjective *philostorgos*, relating to kinship. Familial affection was to pervade the Christian community and, as urged in verse 18, extend to everyone.

### 23 | Romans 8:35, 37–39

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### Translation

*Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? . . . No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

—New Living Translation

Paul’s comprehensive list of afflictions (like those detailed in II Corinthians 11:24–27; 12:10) brings home his point. His questions, one scholar observes, “are all about the kind of God we believe in. Together they affirm that absolutely nothing can frustrate God’s purpose . . . , or quench his generosity . . . , or accuse or condemn his elect . . . , or sunder us from his love. . . .” Another source reflects, “. . . the separation is but seeming; the love is indissoluble.”

“The love of Christ” has sometimes been taken to signify the believer’s love for Christ. More meaningful is its assurance of Christ’s love for us, withstanding all opposition and securing the destruction of evil.

## From Section 6

### 24 | Deuteronomy 33:12

*The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.*

#### Translation

*“Let the one the LORD loves rest safely in him.  
The LORD guards him all day long.  
The one the LORD loves rests in his arms.”*

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

Much as Jacob addressed his sons before his death (see Genesis, chap. 49), Moses blessed the tribes of Israel (each named for one of Jacob’s descendants) near the end of his life. Verse 12 is his blessing of the tribe of Benjamin, among whose descendants are King Saul and the Apostle Paul (see I Samuel 9:1, 2; Romans 11:1).

The Hebrew noun rendered *shoulders* in this passage (*kāṭēp*) can indicate the slope of a hill or mountainside. Because Zion, where Yahweh was thought to dwell, was in the land of Benjamin, some commentaries see *shoulders* as an allusion to that habitation. Most, though, link the word to God’s care instead of Benjamin’s location. As in its literal sense—of a child held close to a parent’s chest or a lamb on a shepherd’s back—the image imparts a sweet consciousness of God’s protecting presence.

### 26 | Proverbs 30:4, 5

*Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? . . . Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*

#### Translation

*Have any ever caught the wind in their hands?*

*Or wrapped up water in a piece of cloth?*

*Or fixed the boundaries of the earth? . . .*

*“God keeps every promise he makes. He is like a shield for all who seek his protection.”*

—Good News Translation

Read a related editorial, “Man not in the storm” by Paul Stark Seeley.

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**Thomas Hacker**, *Lompoc, California, US*

> **Maryann McKay**, “When ‘It’s not possible’ brought us safety,” *Sentinel*, October 13, 2025

What an incredible testimony! At a time when the world is so full of fear, it's comforting to know that there is only one power and that people are living and proving this in their day-to-day experiences. It empowers all of us to keep our thought firmly fixed on the truth, no matter what the physical senses are declaring.

**Chris May**, *Minneapolis, Minnesota, US*

> **Larissa Snorek**, “The transformative power of Love over anger,” *Sentinel*, October 13, 2025

Wow! Thank you for this helpful editorial. It's exactly what I needed to hear and apply to my prayers about what is happening throughout the world, including the US, Ukraine, and Gaza.

**Linda Noren**, *Petaluma, California, US*

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## Letters & Conversations

*Thomas Hacker, Chris May, Linda Noren*

> **Elijah Litheko**, “‘Read the book—and it will heal you,’” *Sentinel*, October 27, 2025

A beautiful article that demonstrates the healing power of prayer to free us from evils such as poverty, illness, political turmoil, and racism. It's inspiring to know that Christian Science is present worldwide and available to all mankind.

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