



The CHRISTIAN SCIENCE JOURNAL

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through
God to the pulling down of strong holds. —II Corinthians 10:4

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Welcome - January 2026

By Peter Whitmore

Dear Friend,

As humanity celebrates a new calendar year, I felt inspired to read the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis, along with Mary Baker Eddy's explanation that, "This word *beginning* is employed to signify *the only*,—that is, the eternal verity and unity of God and man, including the universe" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 502).

Christian Scientists strive to know and demonstrate the forever now-ness of the spiritual facts of divine Science—day by day, hour by hour, even moment by moment—through spiritual renewal and regeneration. So, too, the Christian Science periodicals are forever fresh. Contributors fill their pages with new articulations and demonstrations of these same facts. Not old views, but living, eternal ones.

Now in its second month, a new section, "The Bible: Our Sufficient Guide," highlights how two different writers found rejuvenating inspiration—for one, even physical healing—by reading and praying with the same Bible story.

And in this month's "Living Church" section, the Editor of *The Christian Science Monitor* shares how continually committing to the original object of the newspaper, and to practicing the Christian love undergirding it, can improve *Monitor* journalism and bring healing to the world.

So, as we turn the pages of our calendars, we invite you to celebrate—revel in—the forever nowness and freshness not just in this issue of the *Journal*, the first of 2026, but in each of the Christian Science periodicals—the *Monitor*, the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, the *Christian Science Sentinel*, and for those reading other languages, *The Herald of Christian Science*. We invite you not just to read them, but to write the truths in your heart by practicing them. And to include the publications in your prayers—knowing that the foundational, healing ideas will reach and encourage

the hungry human heart yearning to better understand God, ever-present, always and *only* good.

Peter Whitmore, Operations Manager

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers Respond

By Audrey Ball, David A. Cornell, Maggie Johnson, Juli Litzkow, Truth Johnston, Audys Dodge Losche

Whit Larsen, "Gratitude that heals bodies and transforms lives," *Journal*, November 2025

This article is so powerful. Thank you for the practical reminders that lead to healing, and I love hearing about the results!

Audrey Ball

Chicago, Illinois, US

Tori Fredrickson, "There is only one I," *Journal*, October 2025

I especially appreciate the distinction that is clearly drawn by the author between the infinite "I" and the finite "I." By selecting the former, one is led to healing that is due to the presence and power of God. Thanks to the author for her insightful article!

David A. Cornell

Boise, Idaho, US

I'm grateful for this brilliant article on how to achieve healing. It explains how there are not two separate points of view, where we strive to align our thoughts and mortal sense of self with how God is seeing us. Rather, we must realize that having a firm sense of being already aligned to the one divine Principle is our natural viewpoint. What a lovely "aha moment" this was for me.

Maggie Johnson

Wow! This is an outstanding issue. It included topics that I needed to hear about and which have helped me to a deeper understanding of God. I like that it addresses subtle misconceptions that I had not been aware of. I had wanted to research JSH-Online.com about topics covered in this issue, but no need to search! Here are the answers in this *Journal*, full of ideas for contemplation and growth.

Juli Litzkow

Chicago, Illinois, US

Roberta Brooke, “God answers our prayer for spiritual desire,” *Journal*, October 2025

Bingo! This article addressed so thoroughly a challenge many of us face in this busy and distracting world. I found myself discovering treasures in each paragraph. It cleared out the cobwebs of self-condemnation and burden so the joy of my deep desire to spend quality time with God could freely come through.

Truth Johnston

Beaverton, Oregon, US

Excellent series

I have found this excellent series aiming to correct misconceptions so helpful in exposing stubborn, sometimes hidden “serpents” in thought that would inhibit progress in regard to spiritual healing. What a blessing!

Audys Dodge Losche

Carson City, Nevada, US

Caring for The Mother Church

By Elizabeth Crecelius Schwartz

Our small plane had just taken off from Boston’s Logan Airport. The sporadic clouds made it possible to see only part of the city skyline out the window, but when I looked down, directly below me was The Mother Church. It stood amid the tall skyscrapers, beautiful in its simplicity and grace.

In my mind, I asked God, “What do I need to do to help keep this church safe?” The answer came to me: “My dear daughter, it’s not up to you. It’s My church. I am big enough to keep it safe from the machinations of material existence. Your job is to know I am doing it.”

I asked myself how I could learn that divine Love is taking care of His beloved church. As I prayed, the first idea that came to me was this counsel from page 264 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: “We must look where we would walk, and we must act as possessing all power from Him in whom we have our being.” This instructed me to keep my eye on spiritual goals and activities.

The constancy of the church services (every Sunday and Wednesday) has often helped me get back on track when I have wandered from the spiritual path. The love for church and the love felt at church have also made me want to agree to and accept the activities that increase my commitment to infinite Spirit. If I’m consistently thinking more spiritually, I will more habitually let divine Love lead me forward; and then, it will be more natural for me to accept that God is in control of church, my life, and everyone else’s.

In the book of Psalms, David prays, “Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies” (27:11). I wanted David’s prayer to be mine also. Many Bibles, like the Amplified Bible and the New American Standard Bible, translate the word

“plain” as “level.” What would be a level path that would keep me safe from enemies? A path consistent with spiritual growth. A path filled with appreciation for the ever-presence of divine Love. A path of calm, steadfast reliance on Truth.

In this psalm, I think of “enemies” not as people, but as habits and actions that would lead me astray—in this case, anything that would keep me from recognizing that divine Love is holding the church safe. At times, apathy, or lack of interest, has been one of those enemies. It seems that almost every Wednesday evening, the suggestion comes that I am too tired to go to my branch church’s Wednesday testimony meeting. I have to remind myself that “sleep and apathy are phases of the dream that life, substance, and intelligence are material” (*Science and Health*, p. 249).

Giving in to this apathy retards my efforts to joyfully work for the church and dampens my desire to ponder spiritual truths at that Wednesday evening service. Apathy may attempt to hamper my spiritual progress and make me unwilling to, for example, conduct services as a Reader, or it may keep me from reading the weekly Bible Lesson every day. I need to be alert to this enemy of my spiritual growth and not let it get me off the path of regeneration.

I also recognize that if I focus on someone’s personality, this is another enemy that tries to get me off the spiritual path. *Science and Health* clearly states: “Personality is not the individuality of man” (p. 491). The enemy of focusing on personality (on someone’s temperament, character faults, biases, attitudes, etc.) may keep us from focusing on the permanence and durability of The Church of Christ, Scientist, that Mary Baker Eddy founded. The enemy of seeing fellow church members as flawed human beings tries to keep me from supporting the church and my fellow members.

One time, another woman and I were elected to serve on our branch church’s executive board. I knew that divine Love had led this individual to stand for election, but I was not sure she really had anything concrete to add to the work of the board. I recognized that suggestion as accepting personality instead of paying attention to the spiritual individuality given to each of us by God. In

the end, it turned out to be so beneficial to have her on the board. Her long history with the members and the church helped us all through many decisions. I was so very grateful Love had put her there and grateful I had turned away from personality.

Another enemy to address is the suggestion of a human ego. I realized that my first question to God—“What do I need to do to help keep this church safe?”—was an egotistical question. It assumed I had a selfhood apart from divine Mind and that it was up to me to do something.

Egotism leads to thinking we are personally responsible or that we are inadequate or burdened. The one Ego is divine Mind, and the divine Mind is in charge of all aspects of church—its growth, its supply, its unity and joy. My job is to know that divine Mind is able and willing to carry church forward in the life of each of us.

Christian Science—which church is a demonstration of—is the Comforter that Jesus promised. We can become conscious of the truth that there is no other institution that causes us to imbibe the renewal, the stillness, the regeneration that are inherent in church.

As I prayed, the divine purpose of church became very real to me. *Science and Health* states, “The Church is that institution, which affords proof of its utility and is found elevating the race, rousing the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas and the demonstration of divine Science, thereby casting out devils, or error, and healing the sick” (p. 583).

And this verse from the book of Psalms explains my job in accepting what divine Love, God, is responsible for—overseeing and directing The Church of Christ, Scientist: “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord” (27:14).

The love, warmth, and affection of church is beautifully stated in Mrs. Eddy’s words to a branch church: “*Beloved Brethren*:—The spreading branches of The Church of Christ, Scientist, are fast reaching out their broad shelter to the entire world. Your faith has not been without works,—and God’s love for His flock is

manifest in His care. He will dig about this little church, prune its encumbering branches, water it with the dews of heaven, enrich its roots, and enlarge its borders with divine Love. God only waits for man's worthiness to enhance the means and measure of His grace. You have already proof of the prosperity of His Zion. You sit beneath your own vine and fig-tree as the growth of spirituality—even that vine whereof our Father is husbandman" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 154).

Today, I feel divine Love digging about The Church of Christ, Scientist, pruning its branches and watering it. My job is to accept the omnipotence and omnipresence of this Love. My job—which I am so very willing to do because it brings such joy—is to continue to grow spiritually, and to accept the allness and onliness of God. The Church of Christ, Scientist, is unassailable amid the obstacles and attempted interference of material existence because it represents "the structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle" (*Science and Health*, p. 583). It is built and maintained by divine Love and is, therefore, continually sure and safe.

ARTICLES

The enduring divine Principle of Christian Science healing

By Sue A. Spotts

Every experience of Christian healing—from the Gospel accounts through the book of Acts, down the centuries to the present day—points to God as the divine healing Principle. The Bible uses terms such as *rock*, *foundation*, *corner stone*, and *refuge* to describe the solid, dependable, life-sustaining power of God, on which individuals can rely in every age with sacred confidence.

Through our individual experiences of Christ-healing, we discover for ourselves that divine Principle endures, operating with healing and saving efficacy now as in previous eras. God's power is no more diminished by passing time, changes in human circumstances, or pressures from an increasingly materialistic society than is the science of mathematics. In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, explains, "From the infinite One in Christian Science comes one Principle and its infinite idea, and with this infinitude come spiritual rules, laws, and their demonstration, which, like the great Giver, are 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever'" (p. 112).

Central to the teachings of Christ Jesus is the revelation that the kingdom of heaven—the realm and reign of God, Spirit, including God's spiritual, perfect man—is here and now. In prayer that longs to know God, this reality of His all-power and ever-presence, and of ourselves as His cherished offspring, comes into clearer focus. This has the effect of dispelling fear and healing disease. Divine Principle operates in human consciousness with such healing certainty that Christian Science terms its means and effect divine law.

If this synonym for God—Principle—feels like a somewhat cold or unrelatable term, we can gratefully consider that this same God is man's loving Father-Mother. The God who, as divine Principle, maintains each of us as His spiritual child in harmonious relation to Himself according to divine law, is the same God whose grace toward us is "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23) and whose tender impartations to us are "more in number than the sand" (Psalms 139:18). The God who decrees rightness and justice throughout His vast immortal creation also tenderly upholds each of us as His pure spiritual expression, forever in the orbit of His love.

It's noteworthy that, in her published writings, Mrs. Eddy frequently links the synonym Principle to the practice of Christian Science healing. Understanding and acknowledging God as the divine Principle of our healing practice can be extraordinarily freeing. It releases us from a false sense of responsibility for healing, as well as from any feeling of inadequacy we

may be entertaining about giving Christian Science treatment. We glimpse that we are simply not on our own in our efforts to pray effectively and bring about healing.

In the Preface to *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy speaks directly to this point when she writes: “The physical healing of Christian Science results now, as in Jesus’ time, from the operation of divine Principle, before which sin and disease lose their reality in human consciousness and disappear as naturally and as necessarily as darkness gives place to light and sin to reformation. Now, as then, these mighty works are not supernatural, but supremely natural. They are the sign of Immanuel, or ‘God with us,’—a divine influence ever present in human consciousness and repeating itself, coming now as was promised aforetime,

To preach deliverance to the captives
[of sense],
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are
bruised.”
(p. xi)

I love how this statement fully credits divine Principle with the healing power, citing “the operation of divine Principle, before which sin and disease lose their reality in human consciousness ...” So we can acknowledge that whatever discord or challenge we may be facing, the discord—which is at base error, or false belief—has the operation of divine Principle to contend with rather than us personally. This position changes the terms of engagement, so to speak, from a personal “I” that is attempting to defeat error, to God as our sure defense and the vital source of all healing. It becomes increasingly clear, then, that fear, dark images of mortal thought, and false material sense evidence must give place to God and His Christ, the true idea of God, and consequently “disappear as naturally and as necessarily as darkness gives place to light and sin to reformation.”

A much-cherished healing in my early years as a public practitioner of Christian Science came about largely as the result of insight gained into the nature of God as the enduring Principle of Christianly scientific healing.

A friend called asking for help through prayer for what she described as open wounds on her feet. The condition had persisted for some time, she explained, and a Christian Science nurse was helping out, to make sure the areas were properly bandaged. It was a privilege to begin praying for my friend.

At this same time, I had begun reading the book *Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age* by Robert Peel, which includes a number of verified and very moving accounts of Christian Science healing. Besides treating the case daily through prayer, I felt it would be natural to allow the inspiration gained from the wonderful healings relayed in this book to inform and strengthen my conviction of God’s healing power. The goal was to read each account prayerfully and thoughtfully, and let it uplift my thinking about myself, my practice, and the broader role of Christian Science healing in the world.

I should mention that the testimonies I was reading weren’t discussing healings of conditions similar to the one I was praying about. That didn’t seem important to me. It was what these accounts were saying about the willingness and power of divine Love to heal and save, and the utter impartiality of this Love, that was important.

Soon, a very meaningful idea came to thought. I knew it was a message from God, as it was deeply inspiring: “The divine Principle responsible for the healing that you’re reading about is the same divine Principle operating on behalf of the patient.” Many times throughout the next few days, as gratitude welled up for each healing account, this idea recurred. It was a clear spiritual insight into the fact that God, the divine Principle of man’s true being, was the only power and influence in the case I was praying about.

I continued to pray for the individual, bolstered by the inspiration I was gaining from the testimonies. A few days later my friend said she was grateful to report that the condition on her feet had completely cleared up.

I have to say that, throughout this experience, I felt more like a witness than an instigator of healing. I thought of Moses at the burning bush which, though actively on fire, was not consumed. He stopped to observe it, and then he heard God speak to him. With

each testimony I read, I felt I was being called, in a way, to stop mentally and bear witness to the allness of God, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter, which the testimony illustrated.

I also recognized that, had I approached the testimonies from a narrow, personal perspective—wondering, for example, if I could possibly pray as effectively as the testifier, or questioning if I had as much persistence, faith, or spiritual understanding as they—I might well have missed the essential spiritual point: Divine Principle, not person, is the scientific healer.

The truth is, God doesn't endow some more than others with the capacity to know Him, or credit a few select individuals as more likely than others to experience healing. Jesus said as much when he likened the love of our Father-Mother God to rain, which falls beneficently and equally on all.

We could say that our job as Christian healers is to be Christlike, to express to the best of our ability the spiritual qualities described in the Beatitudes—including humility, purity of motive and affection, and love of the truth. These attitudes, these dispositions of the heart, constitute the demeanor before God whereby we experience the inspiration of the Most High in our prayer, denounce the lies of fear and disease, and effectively bear witness to the operation of divine Principle. As certainly as the morning sun rises over the eastern landscape, divine Principle brings forth healing.

Principle by its nature is unfailing, and its healing effect irreversible. Our prayers naturally acknowledge these spiritual facts; and God's gentle, healing Christ enables us to feel and know that they are so, and to experience the sure effect of divine Principle in our lives.

Trusting God's unlimited paradigms

By Randal Craft

During a major transition time in my life, I was unsure of my next steps. If I moved, I would have two places full of things that would have to be dealt with, and a third one that would need to be sold. If I stayed, decisions would have to be made about my living arrangements, including the consolidation of household goods.

I was particularly concerned about how everything was going to happen if I moved, which would involve repairing and selling one property, repairing and renting out another one, as well as purchasing and renovating the new one. It would also require me to pack up and move two households into one location, as well as donating, distributing, and selling furniture and miscellaneous items, including a car. It all seemed as though it could take at least a year to accomplish.

My expectations at the time were based on material paradigms of how things should get done and how long it should take to do them, considering past experiences and input from others. Feeling daunted, I turned to God for direction. "I will go anywhere You want me to go, live anywhere You lead me, or stay here," I prayed. "Just show me the way, and I will follow."

My trust in divine wisdom was based on what I had learned from my study of Christian Science about God as infinite Love that meets every human need. And so, during these days, I prayerfully continued to ask God for His guidance and also to affirm that the one divine Mind is in complete control, not various mortal minds. Contrary to material perceptions, God's creation—including each one of us—is entirely spiritual, and He governs all according to His law of eternal harmony.

I had witnessed God's hand at work in my life many times before and had seen evidence of divine government in resolutions to difficult situations. So I saw this new challenge as a great opportunity to shift my view of reality from the mistaken sense of life in matter, with all its vagaries, discords, and limitations,

to the true, spiritual perception of divine Life unfolding in order and harmony.

I prayerfully affirmed that God's plan for me was already in place and being expressed in abundant goodness, joy, well-being, employment, and supply—all unlimited by material paradigms of how it was best and most likely for human needs to be met.

A *paradigm* could be defined as a pattern or model. A stanza from a hymn in the *Christian Science Hymnal* conveys the unlimited goodness and harmony of God's spiritual models:

God could not make imperfect man
His model infinite;
Unhallowed thought He could not plan,
Love's work and Love must fit.
Life, Truth and Love the pattern make,
Christ is the perfect heir;
The clouds of sense roll back, and show
The form divinely fair.
(Mary Alice Dayton, No. 51)

Not long after I prayed, I was driving home from some errands and saw a "For Sale" sign on a property near where I lived. I stopped in to see it and learned that multiple offers had already been made by other potential buyers. One of them, based upon preapproval of a home loan, had been quickly accepted by the seller. I felt led to apply for preapproval of a loan myself, which proved to be helpful down the line.

I continued to pray during these days, confident that things would work out in an orderly and harmonious way. One day my financial advisor emailed me to set up an unexpected meeting during an inconvenient time, but I felt divinely impelled to make the appointment. During our meeting, he shared an idea that was pivotal in enabling me to go forward with finding a property to buy.

One thing quickly led to another, and I found a place in an area I hadn't considered before, but where I felt divinely led. My offer was accepted and a purchase agreement was signed. The situation I had gone through was well described in a Bible verse: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he

should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

In prayer, I continued to turn away from a material sense of my future with limited options and a host of decisions to make. Instead, I strove to maintain a spiritual perspective, with God guiding me each step of the way in accord with His will—and He did. Acknowledging God's ever-presence at every opportunity, I felt reassured by this counsel in Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (3:5, 6).

Mary Baker Eddy, the Founder of Christian Science, writes, "How true it is that whatever is learned through material sense must be lost because such so-called knowledge is reversed by the spiritual facts of being in Science" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 312).

This is an apt description of why the paradigms I had been considering earlier were so limited. They were based solely on human reasoning. I saw so clearly that I needed to model my expectations on God's infinite paradigms. And I prayerfully worked to open thought to do God's will without any material limits whatsoever. God is the true source of all good and has abundant power to bless. He unfolds our activities and meets our needs from a boundless spiritual basis. When we rely on Him, we can accomplish goals and find solutions in ways we might never have thought possible.

An account in the Gospel of John shows that Christ Jesus overcame limited material paradigms and proved God's infinite spiritual paradigms. The disciples had entered a ship to go toward Capernaum, and in the darkness that night they saw Jesus coming toward them, walking on the water. "Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went" (John 6:21). Jesus had overcome matter-based thinking about how to get from one place to another and how long that should take.

So, what does God's timing look like? Sometimes, as in my case, it's like a fast-moving train. As I prayed, listened for, and followed God's guidance, the steps I

needed to take quickly unfolded one after another, and I experienced a smooth and efficient “ride.” What had originally looked as if it could take about a year ended up taking about a quarter of that time!

At other times, God’s unfoldment might seem slow and perhaps involve spiritual growth we didn’t realize we needed. In those cases, we must trust that God is preparing the way, even if immediate progress isn’t evident. *Science and Health* instructs us: “Wait patiently for divine Love to move upon the waters of mortal mind, and form the perfect concept. Patience must ‘have her perfect work’” (p. 454).

The words of a hymn capture the wonderful unfoldment of God’s paradigms:

’Tis God the Spirit leads
In paths before unknown;
The work to be performed is ours,
The strength is all His own.

Supported by His grace,
We still pursue our way;
Assured that we shall reach the prize,
Secure in endless day.

God works in us to will,
He works in us to do;
His is the power by which we act,
His be the glory too.
(Benjamin Beddome, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 354,
adapt. © CSBD)

Christian Science and athletics

By Seth Johnson

Growing up, I participated in many competitive sports. I found sports to be a great vehicle for practicing and demonstrating Christian Science, for proving God’s presence and power in my daily life. I learned that

sports were more about spiritual growth and learning to be God-centered, than prowess.

Athletics provided a great opportunity to establish and strengthen my relationship with God. Any athletic endeavor became an occasion to grow spiritually, to develop skills, and to have fun.

I learned to establish a sense of spiritual dominion and purpose, striving for my best performance with expectancy and joy. Athletics became a discovery, an adventure, a time to demonstrate God-given abilities and to glorify God. The goal was to express spiritual qualities and participate with poise, strength, agility, quickness, courage, and freedom.

How does a student of Christian Science succeed in athletics? I’ve found the key to excelling and enjoying sports from a spiritual perspective includes preparation, inspiration, motivation, a proper competitive attitude, sharing, and humility.

Preparation

A memorable part of growing up was starting each day with one of my parents reading a section or two of the weekly Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly* to my brothers and sisters and me around the breakfast table. Sometimes neighborhood friends even stopped by our house on the way to school and listened in. The Lesson-Sermon was a springboard to each day; not only did it help with athletics, but it was very applicable to our academics and social activities after school and on the weekends.

As I got into my teens, I also kept note cards with quotes from the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy and would refer to them on a regular basis, especially before games. They included: “Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Corinthians 10:31); “I can of mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30); “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17); and “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16), among others.

I learned that mental preparation is essential to both performing well and enjoying any sport. And preparation, centered on the Bible Lesson and other specific ideas from the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, has provided a sound basis on which to progress spiritually.

Inspiration

I've found that inspiration is the key to athletic success. Inspiration makes practice enjoyable and leads to the sacrifice and effort required to reach our potential. Inspired thought helps lift us above limited, mortal beliefs. I remember regularly thinking, "Nothing can take the place of inspired thought."

We read in *Science and Health*, "Inspired thought relinquishes a material, sensual, and mortal theory of the universe, and adopts the spiritual and immortal" (p. 547). The inspired athlete plays with a knowledge that God is present during every game and practice; in this way, the athlete not only sharpens their skills but proves immortal facts and progresses spiritually.

Motivation

It's important to be clear about our reasons for playing, with a desire to glorify God as our central purpose. Athletics are really an arena within which we can discover more about our relationship to God. One has to handle erroneous beliefs such as doubt, limitation, fear, envy, and a false sense of competition. We are not really trying to prove we are better than someone else, but are doing our best and expressing our God-given abilities. These words from *Science and Health* are very applicable: "Right motives give pinions to thought, and strength and freedom to speech and action" (p. 454).

PROPER Competitive attitude

This is very important. The word *competition* is derived from a Latin word meaning "to strive together." We are not really playing against someone else, but playing for God, and we are agreeing with our opponent to do our best, overcome limitations, raise the level of play, progress and improve. "Progress is the law of God, whose law demands of us only what we can certainly fulfil" (*Science and Health*, p. 233).

It's important to strive to play our very best, which can translate to playing to win. Winning requires mental and physical discipline and much more than half-hearted effort. And the score does not necessarily tell who is winning from a spiritual perspective.

When we are not afraid to lose or fail, we can just let go and do our best. We all have a wealth of good to contribute, and we can confidently compete with a determined sense, with heart and soul, with purpose and resolve to glorify God. Play fearlessly to do your best. *Science and Health* states: "To ascertain our progress, we must learn where our affections are placed and whom we acknowledge and obey as God.... The objects we pursue and the spirit we manifest reveal our standpoint, and show what we are winning" (p. 239).

Sharing

Athletics provide great opportunities to share Christian Science—on the field, in the locker room, in our pre- or post-game conversations—through setting an example and disproving the false labels that seem to go along with sports. This makes room for Godlike qualities such as integrity, honesty, purity, and unselfishness. It's a time of giving and receiving, as well as letting your light shine. Athletics also present many opportunities for healing.

While I was playing college soccer, a friend and I stayed after practice one day and did some extra training. He was the goalie on our team and I was a midfielder. I wanted to do some extra work on my shooting, and he wanted to work on a particularly difficult type of save. I had already taken several shots on goal, when on one shot, he dove high to make the save and landed on his arm with it fully extended. I could see he was in considerable pain. When I went over to see if he was OK, we both noticed his shoulder was dislocated.

We were good friends, and he knew I was a Christian Scientist. I tried to comfort him as best I could and began to affirm in my own thought God's presence and power right there. I asked him if I could pray for him, he said OK, and I shared with him that God was right there with us. I remember very clearly feeling God's presence and power caring for my friend and me.

Within several minutes his shoulder was back in place and we walked back to the locker room. This memory of healing has stayed with both of us for many decades, and in the last year we again talked about that experience from years ago. Both he and I remain very grateful for the healing.

Humility

Humility is the key to a truly great athlete. One recognizes that their ability comes from God, gives the glory to God, and seeks to demonstrate God's presence in their experience. We are guaranteed to do our best if we truly practice what we know of Christian Science in our athletic endeavors. God is all-acting and we reflect Him. We see His allness manifested, right in our activity.

In the true spirit of a post-game recap: I'm very grateful to have been raised playing many sports, having the opportunity to learn how to apply Christian Science in my athletic endeavors in a very tangible way. Preparation, inspiration, motivation, proper competitive attitude, sharing, and humility do lead to a truly fulfilling athletic experience.

Athletics provide great opportunities to demonstrate Christian Science both in the way we play and the way we conduct ourselves. We put our spiritual understanding of God and His children to work within our present experience. We thank God for the opportunity to participate, acknowledge that we are reflecting His qualities, and then go out and do our absolute best.

Practical infinity

By David Grier

The concept of infinity is an important one in both Christian Science and mathematics. A mathematical scientist needs to understand infinity in order to solve the problems of calculus, the mathematics of motion. In

Christian Science, infinity is key to understanding the nature of God and supports our ability to heal.

The Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker 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).

To gain that "proper sense of the infinite," we need to look beyond limitations and finite concepts. Even in mathematics, we need to think in new ways in order to begin to understand infinity and to get the practical results that come from that understanding.

When I was working as a mathematical scientist, I was a little surprised to discover how Christian Science helped me understand the mathematical concept of infinity and how, in turn, those mathematical ideas helped me understand how a proper grasp of infinity was important to healing.

To understand infinity, mathematicians start with a definition that is surprisingly close to a couple of verses from Psalms that describe the unlimited range of God's thought: "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand" (139:17, 18). In those verses, the key phrase that describes infinity is "more in number." To a mathematician, infinity is represented by the symbol ∞ , which is bigger than any number. More important than any *quantity* of ∞ is the *quality* of it always being bigger. Bigness is not enough. The number 1,000,000,000 is a big number, but it is not infinite. If you had 1,000,000,000 objects and started taking them away one at a time, you'd eventually go through all of them and have nothing left. But if you had an infinite collection, you would never run out. To be infinite, a quantity cannot simply be big. It must always be bigger.

In mathematics, the simplest example of an infinite collection is the counting numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. The collection is infinite because it has no limit. To understand the consequences of this definition of infinity, we will take the counting numbers and look

at two subsets of them: the even numbers (2, 4, 6, and so on) and the odd numbers (1, 3, 5, and so on). Though neither subset contains everything included in the whole, nevertheless both subsets are also infinite. If you think you have found the largest even number, you simply add two to that number and you have a new even number that is bigger. The same is true for the collection of odd numbers. It has no upper bound.

It's an important and perhaps surprising fact that, to a mathematician, the subsets of counting numbers are both as infinite as the full set. The full set of counting numbers is infinite. So is the subset of even numbers. So is the subset of odd numbers. There is no such thing as "half infinity." A mathematician can even prove that there is a way of dividing the original counting numbers into an infinite number of subsets and that each of those subsets is infinite.

When we turn from the world of mathematics to the Science of being, we find a similar idea. God is the infinite Principle, or creator. His qualities, alluded to by His synonyms, which include not only Principle but also such names as Life, Truth, Soul, and Spirit, are also infinite. One can never run out of aspects of Love or Mind—other names for God—to learn.

God creates man in His image and likeness; hence man expresses the infinity of God. That infinity is not converted to finiteness with respect to His creation. God doesn't dollop out a little bit of finite goodness to each of us. We all get the full promise of infinite goodness—we each express all of His qualities.

I learned something of the practical nature of understanding infinity when I was studying mathematics. I had found myself in a position that felt as if God had given me only a finite bit of goodness and it was the wrong goodness. To fulfill a requirement for my program, I had to take a course on the mathematics of medical research, and I was doing very badly in it. As a lifelong Christian Scientist, I was not only unfamiliar with the underlying medical concepts, but resentful of being subjected to lengthy descriptions of them. By the final weeks of the course, I had failed every exam and every homework assignment. To pass the course, I had to do well on the two final graded assignments: a project

and a final exam that would include material we had not studied in class.

One night, I turned to God as the infinite Being. Just as mathematicians need to drop their finite view of numbers and embrace the arithmetic of infinity, I sought to understand the rules of an infinite God. I saw that because God is infinite, He is bigger than any problem I might face. I also knew that God gave infinity to me—gave me that sense of always being bigger—because I reflect God (as we each do) as God's expression. So I included the power that was bigger than my problems. And so, my infinite nature was not a "half infinity," because no such thing existed. Nor was I ill-matched to the problems I was facing. Infinity was infinity and it was bigger than any problem confronting me.

As I became calmer, I remembered a quote from *Science and Health*: "God expresses in man the infinite idea forever developing itself, broadening and rising higher and higher from a boundless basis" (p. 258).

After this prayer, I was able to finish the project—without having to delve into the medical context. I based the project on a problem I had seen in an industrial setting. The professor commented that my work was remarkably clear and that it explained the mathematics beautifully.

My new understanding of God's infinite nature also quickly addressed the second challenge I faced: the final exam, which was based on material that had not been covered in class. When I started looking at this new material, I soon discovered that I had seen these concepts years before, when I was an undergraduate. I also discovered that they explained the material that we had studied in class without needing the medical context. With only a few hours of studying, I felt ready for the final. I passed the exam with the highest mark in the class, and to my surprise, I was asked to be the teaching assistant for the next offering of the class. Also, I finished the course with a great deal of love and respect for the professor and for my fellow students, who had seen my struggles during the semester.

A "proper sense of the infinite" is more than a simple acceptance that God has some bit of good for each of

us. It takes us to a new level of understanding, where entirely different rules apply. The infinitude of God means that God, good, has all power and therefore is the only power. There is no other power that could conquer God, thwart God, or even temporarily stymie God. Since we are the creation of God, we bear witness to that power. The all-power of God is expressed in what we do and points back to God as its source.

When we struggle with problems, such as illness, lack, or the kind of problem I faced in graduate school, it is a sign that we are trying to apply finite beliefs to an infinite creator and infinite creation. We see the goodness that comes from God's infinitude manifested when we drop those finite perceptions, even a little, and gain a proper, spiritual sense of the infinite.

The mighty roar of silent prayer

By Richard Albins

During a dramatic scene in a movie I was watching recently, I found myself praying for a character who was in danger. Afterward I had to laugh because I recalled a talk given years ago by a Christian Scientist who made a joke something like, "Have you ever found yourself praying for a character in a movie? I have. But my prayer never changed what happened to the character."

I mentioned this to a friend who is a Christian Science practitioner, thinking we'd share a chuckle. Her response was quick: "Oh, don't ever think that prayer is for nothing! It goes forth into world thought and is picked up by a receptive heart somewhere." Then, pausing for emphasis, she added, "No prayer is ever wasted!"

That gave me a lot to think about and helped me understand that it's never just an individual character's predicament we're praying about. We're bringing the

spiritual truths of God and man to bear on human issues, and that has to have a healing effect on world thought.

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy writes: "The 'still, small voice' of scientific thought reaches over continent and ocean to the globe's remotest bound. The inaudible voice of Truth is, to the human mind, 'as when a lion roareth.' It is heard in the desert and in dark places of fear" (p. 559).

What a beautiful way of emphasizing the power of silent prayer!

So, now whenever I pray for peace and harmony—be it for Ukraine, Gaza, or anywhere harmony seems to be under attack—I know my prayer has to be effective. Somewhere, someone with a receptive heart is humbly waiting and listening for comfort and healing, and I've learned to trust that my prayer is helping to meet the need. And likewise, someone else's prayers from across "the globe's remotest bound" are no doubt reaching out to my receptive thought and blessing me in return.

Moments of the new birth

By Sally Husak Turner

In the third chapter of the Gospel of John, a Pharisee named Nicodemus comes to Jesus and acknowledges that he is a teacher sent by God. Jesus responds that one must be born again to see the kingdom of God.

"How can someone be born when they are old?" the puzzled Nicodemus asks. Jesus answers, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again'" (see John 3:4–7, New International Version).

This exchange is still instructive today. Like Nicodemus, don't we want to see the kingdom of God?

And if so, don't we need to know how to experience this new birth?

The Greek word for "again" is *anōthen*, and it can be translated "from above." So, the new birth points to man's true origin in Spirit, God. Jesus' reference to water indicates that a baptism of sorts is also required—a cleansing immersion in the pure nature of God.

In an article entitled "The New Birth," Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, elucidates what Jesus meant about being born again. As she explains, this new birth results from an ongoing change in thinking. "The new birth is not the work of a moment. It begins with moments, and goes on with years; moments of surrender to God, of childlike trust and joyful adoption of good; moments of self-abnegation, self-consecration, heaven-born hope, and spiritual love" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 15).

The promise of this new birth is life-changing. It results in more harmony, health, and the ability to heal. But we don't have to achieve the new birth alone. God puts the desire in our hearts to seek these seven types of holy moments mentioned, which lovingly guide us toward a clearer apprehension of the kingdom of heaven.

Surrender to God

In moments of surrender to God we yield control to the one Divine Being. This may require relinquishing our own views and plans in favor of God's. We give ourselves over to our Father-Mother God, listening for Her direction, accepting Her comforting ideas, and resting in Her loving embrace.

Surrendering takes humility and daily practice. It requires discipline of thought and action. It also compels us to give up beliefs and opinions that we have learned from sources other than God, which therefore are false.

Because God, our constant helper, is omnipotent, there is no condition or situation that is beyond Her control. As we surrender to Her, we can trust that absolute, loving control.

Childlike trust

As a child places unconditional trust in the care provided by his or her parents, we can fully trust God, whose parenting is infinitely more reliable than even the best human parenting. The better we know God's nature, the more natural it becomes to trust Her completely. Because God is first and foremost Love, we can feel confident of Her steadfast nurturing and guiding presence in our lives.

Being childlike allows us to leave a material, limited way of thinking behind and embrace our spiritual identity as a child of God. Trusting as a child does includes recognizing God as our Parent and embracing Her creation of us as spiritual.

Joyful adoption of good

One way to adopt good is to establish in thought God's goodness as the central law that governs all. "If God is All, and God is good, it follows that all must be good," Eddy said, "and no other power, law, or intelligence can exist" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 101).

Because God, good, is All and fills all space, there is no place for the opposite of good, such as malice, corruption, disease, inharmony, lack, grief, etc. If we allow God's goodness to permeate our thinking, we will see our human experience reflect more of that goodness in practical ways. Again, our Leader writes, "The real Christian Scientist is constantly accentuating harmony in word and deed, mentally and orally, perpetually repeating this diapason of heaven: 'Good is my God, and my God is good. Love is my God, and my God is Love'" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 206).

When our family's beloved dog passed away, I felt a grief like none I'd ever known. She reflected endless joy, companionship, and love, and I felt as though a major source of good had been drained away from our family.

I asked a Christian Science practitioner to pray with me. I knew I had two choices: stay in the pit of grief or joyfully adopt the bountiful goodness our dog expressed. Two angel messages came to me that turned my thought toward good: (1) Our dog had been a gift sent directly from God at a time when each family member needed the very qualities she exhibited; and (2) Good does not have an expiration date. These divine messages

redirected my thought Spiritward until all feelings of grief melted away. As I embraced the good, the grief turned into genuine gratitude for every blessing our dog had given us.

Self-abnegation

Eddy considered self-abnegation crucial to the practice of Christian Science. “Self-abnegation, by which we lay down all for Truth, or Christ, in our warfare against error, is a rule in Christian Science,” says the Christian Science textbook (*Science and Health*, p. 568).

According to Merriam-Webster, *abnegation* means “denial; *especially*: self-denial.” The self we deny is the mortal self—the belief of a selfhood apart from God. We are not material beings with minds and wills of our own, but immortal ideas that reflect Mind, God. Admitting this and giving up what the self wants may require spiritual warfare, but this holy effort is not our own. God gives us both the willingness and the ability to lay down a false sense of self.

Self-consecration

One definition of *consecrate* is “dedicated to a sacred purpose” (Merriam-Webster). Our sacred purpose is devoting ourselves to God and His Christ. This involves staying close to God and following the teachings of Christ Jesus as we go through our day. Moment-by-moment watchfulness is required. We might ask ourselves, Am I obeying the First Commandment—to have no other gods before Spirit?

So many things in today’s world would claim to be gods having power over us: technology, news, politics, money, social media, to name a few. We need to watch that we are not deifying these distractions, allowing them to supplant God in our affections.

Eddy did not mince words about our need to be consecrated to the Christ message as revealed in Christian Science. She writes, “Never was there a more solemn and imperious call than God makes to us all, right here, for fervent devotion and an absolute consecration to the greatest and holiest of all causes” (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 177).

Heaven-born hope

This hope is not wishful thinking. It is the solid conviction that what Christ Jesus came to teach and what the Christ is still teaching us today is true. In other words, as Paul says, our faith and love spring from a hope in what God has “stored up for [us] in heaven” (Colossians 1:5, NIV). Hope is inspired by the Word of God, and the power behind it. As God’s children, we reflect that power and can expect to feel its transforming effect in our lives.

One of the central messages of the Bible is that God keeps His promises. Therefore, we can confidently bank on this heaven-born hope.

Spiritual love

Far above earthly attachment, spiritual love emanates from the consciousness of all-embracing divine Love. This consciousness, reflected in man, is demonstrated in our daily lives as the fruits of Spirit—love, patience, gentleness, meekness, long-suffering—and nothing can resist the power of this spiritual consciousness. When we feel this spiritual love, we get a clearer picture of our identity as the beloved children of God. Spiritual love is what Jesus Christ exemplified and what enabled him to heal instantaneously.

In the Bible, the number seven represents completeness. By consistently entertaining these seven states of thought, we will grow to understand that Spirit is our origin and that we are born anew in Spirit every moment.

In unison with God’s thoughts

By Glenn Williams

Imagine you’re at a large, boisterous party, mingling with other guests, when the faint sound of a beloved song coming from a stereo in the background catches

your attention. It might be too quiet to hear the tune or words clearly, yet it is so familiar that you are able to sing along in perfect unison.

That's how we might think of God's voice coming to us. Even in the midst of the clamor of worldly opinions, it can come as a calm, rational direction. And it's familiar to us because it comes from divine Spirit, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). We are in perfect unison with thoughts from God.

When we pray, we are not trying to bring God closer to us or attempting to move closer to God. We already exist as a reflection of our Father-Mother God's being. Because God is, we are. As Christian Science teaches, prayer involves changing our perception of ourselves as mortal to the true understanding of who we are as God's children. Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "The effect of this Science is to stir the human mind to a change of base, on which it may yield to the harmony of the divine Mind" (p. 162).

When things are going well, our prayers are often expressions of gratitude for all that God, Love, provides for us. When faced with challenges, our prayers might be pleas for assistance. In any circumstance, our needs are already provided, because we are always living, moving, and having our being in God. In that recognition, our completeness as God's likeness comes to light and is ours to demonstrate.

We are constantly presented with divinely right ideas and directions from God. At times, those thoughts, like music at a party, seem lost in the clutter and clatter of mortal thinking. But this cannot truly drown out rational, spiritual thinking, which is part of us like a familiar song. Through our prayers, we can consistently amplify the "still, small voice" of Truth and Love.

INTERLUDE

All things new

By James Walter

Spontaneity partakes of all things new—
new outlooks,
new interests,
new outcomes.
It delights in God's expansive ideas.

It sits lightly on the thought,
working deep changes—
shifting conviction
from belief
entrenched by habit's heavy hand,
to unfettered thought
alive with infinite possibilities.
It opens horizons of discovery,
and sparkles
with the possibilities
of unlimited Life.
It extends our fingers
to touch new heights
we had not dared.

Spontaneity invites us all to become new—
new in thought,
new in substance,
new in being.
It bids us "put off the old man," and "put on the new."
—James Walter

Lost Diamond found, back pain healed

By Cindy Martin

My husband and I were camping in our travel trailer in a remote mountain area and had just gone on a twenty-mile bike ride. That night I noticed that a family heirloom wedding ring I'd been wearing was missing its main diamond. At first I was dismayed because I had wanted to give that ring to a relative, and now it seemed worthless. But as I thought about what the ring represented—God's loving unfoldment and provision in my life—I realized that its true substance could never be lost.

As I prayed, I affirmed that we don't live in a needle-in-a-haystack world with bits of matter randomly strewn about. God's creation is not material at all; it is the reflection of infinite Mind. It was so clear to me that the universe is composed of Spirit and its ideas, whose relationship and place are forever maintained by divine law.

We took our vehicle along the bike route, looking for a sparkling glint, but we found only gravel and rock. When we returned to the trailer and my husband began to prepare it for hauling to our next destination, I turned my view to the beauty surrounding us. At first I was tempted to feel disappointed, but I firmly stated that I was not relinquishing the truth I had perceived. Regardless of whether the diamond was found, I knew the spiritual facts God was revealing to me.

Right at that moment, my husband called me over. While preparing to jack the trailer up, he saw a small hollow underneath the wooden block supporting the jack, and he pointed to a glint coming from there. It was the diamond.

We cried and hugged, not just because of the recovery, but also because of the truth we had learned and seen proved. We were in awe of our amazing God and the

reassurance He was giving us of infinite, intelligent Mind.

Later on that trip, before we were to meet with friends to go hiking and biking, I was suddenly unable to walk upright or without pain. It felt as though something was out of place in my back. I prayed with the same truth—that I was not made up of bits of bone and muscle that could slip out of proper relationship with each other. God's law holds everything in its right place, and man expresses the unobstructed activity of Love and Soul. There is no weakness or malfunction in anything God created.

I was healed quickly and went on a 22-mile bike ride with complete freedom three days later. I was able to participate in all the activities with our friends without hindrance.

Cindy Martin

North Fork, California, US

Weather-related fears healed

By Carole Jackson Poindexter

The state of Florida, where I live, is known for days of extreme summer heat followed by severe thunderstorms. Growing up, I was accustomed to this climate, but as I became more aware of the destructive effects of extreme weather, I developed an irrational fear of storms, and especially tornadoes, about which I would have nightmares.

In the Christian Science Sunday School, I had always learned that my safety is found in God, unchanging good. Early on I was taught the story of the baby Moses being saved from danger and death by his mother's wisdom to place him in "an ark of bulrushes" and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile River. He

was found by Pharaoh's daughter, and his life was preserved.

I had memorized the verses in which Elijah learned that the Lord was not in the earthquake, wind, or fire (see I Kings 19:11, 12). And in stilling a strong wind at sea that threatened to capsize their boat, Christ Jesus demonstrated to his disciples that God is not in the wind or any other harmful weather event. There is no power opposed to God and His laws of harmony, and certainly no destructive power.

Over several years I prayed along these lines, but the nightmares continued.

During high school and college, I followed the weather closely on a weather radio that I kept by my bed and traveled with. It enabled me to quickly gather whatever tidbits of information I could about weather patterns and probabilities. At my various jobs, it became increasingly difficult to remain at work during thunderstorms or times when severe weather was warned about. My schedule began to revolve around this obsessive fear.

I so appreciated the loving and patient treatment from several Christian Science practitioners during this time. One evening, a severe storm arose during a Wednesday testimony meeting at church. I became so fearful that I left my seat and sought the help of a practitioner in the congregation. Her compassionate response was enough to allow me to return to my seat and remain calm.

During college I married a Christian Scientist who loved me despite my fears. He saw that they had no part of my true, spiritual being and helped me overcome them by having what Mary Baker Eddy describes as "pitiful patience" with them (see *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 367), doing all that he could humanly and metaphysically to support my freedom.

After graduating from college, I began my career, choosing between job offers partially based on my perceived "safest" location. I pursued an advanced degree and a certified public accountant certification. And I continued to pray to be free of this debilitating, consuming fear.

The CPA certification required that I travel by car to another city and sit for a multiday exam. As I traveled, I listened to recordings of *Science and Health* and the Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*. I longed to feel close to God, safe and secure.

I reached out in prayer following Mrs. Eddy's guideline, "One thing I have greatly desired, and again earnestly request, namely, that Christian Scientists, here and elsewhere, pray daily for themselves; not verbally, nor on bended knee, but mentally, meekly, and importunately" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 127).

She goes on: "When a hungry heart petitions the divine Father-Mother God for bread, it is not given a stone,—but more grace, obedience, and love. If this heart, humble and trustful, faithfully asks divine Love to feed it with the bread of heaven, health, holiness, it will be conformed to a fitness to receive the answer to its desire; then will flow into it the 'river of His pleasure,' the tributary of divine Love, and great growth in Christian Science will follow,—even that joy which finds one's own in another's good."

The evening before the exam, I was distracted by weather radio alerts concerning bad weather in the area. And more was predicted for the following day. I slept little, if any, that night. I became agitated and afraid about being confined in a windowless auditorium with no ability to leave to escape a potential storm.

By morning, I was exhausted and in no condition to perform well mentally. However, the thought came to me that I was not performing, but reflecting the intelligence and peace of God, which I had demonstrated on so many other occasions. This calmed me and I was able to pray "mentally, meekly, and importunately" for myself.

I headed to the auditorium. I was able to focus on the exam questions, even though we could hear the storm outside. At one point, the lights in the auditorium went out for some time and we were required to sit in the dark until they came back on. Again I prayed, and the story of Noah and the ark came to thought. *Ark* is defined in *Science and Health* in part as "Safety; the idea, or reflection, of Truth, proved to be as immortal as its

Principle; the understanding of Spirit, destroying belief in matter" (p. 581). I knew my real security was not in a physical place but in the understanding of Spirit, God, as all, the only power, the only substance and reality.

I finished the exam and drove home feeling confident and secure. We later learned that there had been dangerous tornadoes in the vicinity of the auditorium. We were completely protected. And I passed the exam.

Most importantly, in the 45 years or so since that time, I have been entirely free of fear of weather. Our family has been protected from the impact of hurricanes and tornadoes. Our two adult children never experienced any fear of the weather and have enjoyed a lifetime of Florida living.

I rejoice in this freedom from the bondage of material beliefs. As our Leader powerfully writes in *Science and Health*, "Citizens of the world, accept the 'glorious liberty of the children of God,' and be free! This is your divine right" (p. 227).

Carole Jackson Poindexter

Jacksonville, Florida, US

Illness healed while traveling abroad

By Reesa Jones

It was my first morning exploring Paris, and I was feeling ill. The more I walked around one of the museums, the worse I felt, until I thought I might need to sit down.

As a student of Christian Science, I'd found that when a discordant situation shows up in my experience, reaching out to God in prayer and then listening is the most reliable way to restore harmony. So I reached out to God and asked for help in addressing this situation.

As we continued exploring the museum, my attention was focused on listening for how God would answer my call, shutting out the physical senses as much as I could. When we stopped in the quiet of the bathroom, the thought came to me, "Don't be fooled; this is hypnotism," and it was followed by a string of thoughts declaring that my entire life is a body of thought, not a body of matter. I accepted these thoughts as the reality of the situation, governing every facet of my being. I returned to the museum, and within 15 minutes I was completely restored to health.

The speed and completeness of this healing caught my attention, and I reflected on this experience with curiosity about why these thoughts had had a healing effect. I first dug into the thought, "Don't be fooled; this is hypnotism." It came from a story I had heard once about someone being on a boat, when a violent storm seemed to come out of nowhere but then calmed. The boatman said that it was hypnotism at play and that the thing someone needs in order to *not* be hypnotized is to hold on to just one true thought.

I had learned that the perceived effects of animal magnetism, another name for hypnotism, come from "the excitement of the imagination and the impressions made upon the senses," as an 18th-century French commission put it (see Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 101).

The idea of only needing one truth in the midst of hypnotism really stuck with me as a practical tool. In this circumstance, God was showing me that I didn't need to be fooled about the state of my health, or hypnotized by beliefs of jet lag, getting sick from being on planes with lots of people, dehydration—I didn't need to buy into any of that.

The next idea I explored was the spiritual concept of body. Two weeks prior to my trip, the weekly Bible Lesson in the *Christian Science Quarterly* had brought to light a reoriented sense of what constitutes body. It included part of "the scientific statement of being" in *Science and Health*, where it says, "All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all" (p. 468). This idea helped shift my thought from a material to a spiritual view of myself. The statement concludes with

what such a view means for mankind: “Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual” (p. 468).

This clarified in my thinking that I’m the image and likeness of God, and therefore, spiritual. I saw that spiritual thoughts constitute the substance of my being, making me a manifestation of Mind.

This was the idea that I held on to in the midst of this claim of illness. I pondered it more deeply, and it multiplied into a greater understanding of divine Life, another name for God. Then I felt whole, healthy, and complete, comforted and cared for, brimming with the joys of adventure and discovery.

It’s really hard for the imagination to be excited by the physical senses when the great truths of being are uplifting thought to a new understanding of reality. Holding on to that one truth broke the hypnotism of illness, dissipating all symptoms immediately and completely.

Analyzing my experience in this way may on the surface make healing appear formulaic: When there’s discord, say a truth about God, and be free. But there is much more to it than that. This experience was undergirded by my trust in God’s good and loving nature; a humble listening and desire to hear; a willingness to let go of hypnotic suggestions; and the choice to hold on tight to a new, uplifting idea that transformed my understanding of reality. To reduce Christian Science to a mere formula would rob us of discovering our intimate relationship with God and the divine revelation that comes from communing with God in prayer, and it is this movement or change in thought that results in physical healing.

This experience has invigorated my desire to practice the Science of Christ with new expectations of hearing God’s comforting ideas and seeing their practical activity in my life, and I’m so very grateful for this waymark on my spiritual adventure.

Reesa Jones

Sherman Oaks, California, US

Child healed after a fall

By Kendall Tuchkova

In 2019, when my daughter was about two years old, my parents and I were playing with her on an outdoor playground. One of the activities for the children involved grabbing on to a small overhead bar shaped like a triangle, which slides along a track and allows them to swing from one platform to another. I stood on one side. My dad stood on the other. We each took a turn pushing her across as we held on to her. She loved it and wanted to go again.

When it was my turn to push her, instead of holding her the entire time, I let go of her a couple of feet before she reached my dad. She had held on to the bar tightly the first time, so I was confident she’d hold on this time, too. Instead, she let go before my dad caught her and fell several feet to the ground.

She began to cry, and I immediately picked her up. Holding and comforting her, I declared that accidents in God’s kingdom are impossible. The Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, states, “Accidents are unknown to God, or immortal Mind, and we must leave the mortal basis of belief and unite with the one Mind, in order to change the notion of chance to the proper sense of God’s unerring direction and thus bring out harmony” (p. 424).

I also prayed to address my feelings of guilt about the mistake in expecting that my daughter would hold on to the bar at such a young age. To comfort my daughter and calm myself, I turned to God, divine Love, who is our true Parent. I knew that Love is both my Parent and my daughter’s. This Parent does not make mistakes or ever leave or neglect His creation. These were the ideas that came to me as we sat on the playground together.

My daughter calmed down. It was time to leave, so I carried her to the car, and we drove to pick up my husband to go to dinner together. At the restaurant, however, her steps were unstable and she fell down as her legs buckled under her. Though she was young, she had not walked unsteadily like this before.

I told my husband what had happened at the playground. He is not a Christian Scientist, and when we got home, he began asking our daughter to walk across the room so he could assess the problem. She was still falling down frequently, so after a few minutes, my husband said we needed to take her to the emergency room.

It was almost our daughter's bedtime, and I was still praying. Having experienced and witnessed many healings through Christian Science treatment, I was confident it would meet our daughter's need this time, too. I asked my husband if we could wait until morning. He asked what I was going to do in the meantime, and I declared, "I'm going to pray!" Knowing that our daughter wouldn't be active until morning, he agreed to wait.

After putting our daughter to bed, I called a Christian Science practitioner to support my prayers with Christian Science treatment. After we spoke, I felt confident that this prayerful work would be effective.

Ever since we'd left the playground, I'd been quietly affirming our daughter's perfection as a child of God. I also kept thinking of another statement from *Science and Health*: "Mind's infinite ideas run and disport themselves" (p. 514).

To me, this meant that divine ideas, which we all are as God's spiritual creation, are made to move with complete freedom. I knew it was our daughter's right to run and play with strength and stability and that she wasn't subject to chance in doing so. I cherished this understanding of her freedom until it felt more real to me than the physical picture of injured legs.

When our daughter woke up the next morning, she was entirely well. There was no evidence of injury, and she walked and ran with complete freedom.

Shortly after that, though, I began to worry that my prayers weren't enough, and that the freedom I'd witnessed in my daughter that morning might not be permanent. I called the practitioner and shared my concerns. She reminded me that "one on God's side is a majority" and assured me we could rejoice in this healing.

After we hung up, I began to think of all the wonderful healings Christ Jesus and, centuries later, Mary Baker Eddy accomplished despite contrary opinions around them. Their examples buoyed my thought, and I felt the certainty of the practitioner's words. I understood that nothing can counter the work of God. My fear dissipated, and the healing was permanent.

I am so grateful for Christian Science and for these types of opportunities that allow us to affirm the practicality of relying on spiritual Truth for our health and well-being!

Kendall Tuchkova

Dayton, Ohio, US

Two touchstone healings

By Linda Sirola Noren

I would like to share two healings that I am very grateful for. They are touchstones in my life that I refer to often. They remind me that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

I was raised in Christian Science and attended Sunday School, but in my teen years and early twenties, I didn't practice its teachings. I even got to the point where I had antagonistic feelings toward this religion. Then came an injury to my foot that was extremely painful. For three days I could only hop around the house and was unable to sleep, as I was so uncomfortable.

Even though I wasn't practicing Christian Science, I wasn't in the habit of going to a doctor. The thought just never occurred to me.

I was visiting my mother at the time. She was practicing Christian Science, although she never tried to push it on me. I now know she must have been praying for how to meet my need.

After seeing me struggle so much, on the third day she gently asked me if I would like to call a Christian Science practitioner. Through tears, I said yes. I don't recall what the practitioner said to me over the phone, but I do recall her gentleness and compassion and how I felt loved. By the end of the call, I was completely healed! The pain disappeared. I was in awe and told her so.

I immediately fell asleep and rested peacefully for 15 hours. When I awoke, there was slight discomfort. Again I called the practitioner. We spoke briefly, and again the pain completely dissipated.

How was this possible? I was not a churchgoer at the time or practicing Christian Science. But I had gotten to the point where I was looking for answers to what life was all about. I had even investigated other spiritual practices and philosophies not based on the Bible, but I hadn't found them satisfying. My thought was open—just not to Christian Science, or so I thought.

So, how did the healing happen? It was my willingness to “repent,” which simply means “to think differently” or “reconsider” (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*). I was willing to hear God's message that I was His beloved child, made in His image and likeness as stated in Genesis 1:26, 27. Since God is Spirit, that means my true being, the substance of my existence, is spiritual, whole, complete, not lacking anything good. As the saying goes, “Man's extremity is God's opportunity.”

Thus began my journey back to studying and practicing the teachings of Christ Jesus. Not long after, I started attending a branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and then became an active member, and a few years later I took Primary class instruction in Christian Science—a two-week course in learning how to heal spiritually as Jesus did.

Some years later, when our kids were in their teens, we were on a camping and hiking trip at a remote, high-elevation location. One day, after we had reached the peak of a mountain, my son got frustrated with me over something. He proceeded down the mountain wanting to put distance between us. I followed, ruminating about the situation and being frustrated with him. In this distracted state of thought, I stepped into a hole created by a large dislodged stone.

After dinner, I could not put any weight on that foot. There was no cell coverage, so I couldn't call a practitioner for help. My husband and daughter read to me from the Bible and *Science and Health*, but it just felt like words. I found no relief.

Eventually, everyone fell asleep except me. I was lying awake in great pain, unable to sleep. I prayed the best I knew how but nothing helped. Finally, I reached out to God in humility and asked, “What do I need to know?” Immediately the answer came, “Love your son.” I was startled and thought, “Well, of course I can do that!” I love our son. My thought was flooded with love and appreciation for him, and in that moment the pain disappeared instantly.

I was astounded! I wanted to shout with joy and hug our son. I couldn't wait for the morning so I could do so and also apologize for any behavior on my part that had been annoying. I slept peacefully.

The next morning I was tempted to hesitate and not put my full weight on that foot. Then the idea came to me that, no, God's work is awesome and is done; it's complete. And with that I proceeded to walk normally.

Both of these healings have been permanent, and I continue to lead a very active life. They've proved to me that truly we are spiritually made. As Paul says, “For in him [God, Spirit, Love] we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

I am so grateful to be learning more each day through my study of the Bible along with Mrs. Eddy's writings, which illuminate the spiritual and practical meaning of the Scriptures—that God, Love, the source of all love, is always present. We can turn to our all-harmonious Father-Mother God day or night, at work, in the car,

at the store, in the mountains, the desert—anywhere—and expect our prayers to be answered and to find healing.

Christ Jesus' healings show us the way to think, to live, and to love so that we can follow in his footsteps and heal too. He proved God's great love for all mankind. This healing power is available to all.

Linda Sirola Noren

Petaluma, California, US

THE BIBLE: OUR SUFFICIENT GUIDE

Costly deceit: The enigma of Ananias and Sapphira

By Madelon Maupin

Sometimes we encounter a story in the Bible that leaves us scratching our heads, wondering where the spiritual kernel is and why it was included.

The book of Acts, authored by the evangelist Luke, features one of those stories. In chapter five, we are told about an early Christian couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who sold a piece of property and then lied about donating the full amount to the church when they had actually kept some of the money for themselves. After Peter confronted them about the deception, they suddenly dropped dead. When such a disturbing story appears, it helps to examine the context and order in which it is presented, which can reveal clues about why it might have been included in a biblical book.

The account immediately follows Acts 4, which describes Barnabas this way: "There was a Levite from Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (verses 36, 37, New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition).

This story appears early in Acts, which begins geographically in Jerusalem. As the book progresses, it reveals how the Christian gospel message spread across the Roman Empire, especially through the evangelizing efforts of the Apostle Paul. The fact that the stories of Barnabas and Ananias appear in Acts 4 and 5, out of a total of 28 chapters, is a subtle way for Luke to highlight the qualities needed to carry the message of Christ Jesus forward. Barnabas' generosity exemplifies a true follower of Christ Jesus—one who is magnanimous, gracious, unselfish.

By contrast, the story of Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, which immediately follows in Acts 5, reveals a different sort of follower. It highlights traits like self-interest, fear of losing, reluctance, and begrudging giving. How would the new church grow if members were not "cheerful givers"? As Paul would write to the Corinthians, "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7, NRSV-UE).

Luke's use of contrast, between God-impelled behavior (Barnabas) and behavior based on one's own self-interest (Ananias and his wife), was a well-known teaching tool for readers of the Hebrew Scriptures, a practice you could call "negative examples." For instance, for all the inspired, obedient prophets like Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others, there was also Jonah—a kind of anti-prophet. He disobeyed God and fled from his assignment (though he later changed course and fulfilled it). What a vivid story illustrating what to do and what not to do.

What contrasts so sharply between Barnabas' beneficence and Ananias' reluctant approach to giving to the early church is that they were social and economic equals. Both owned land. Both appear to have been more upper-class Jews. Both had the financial means to support the young church. Such similarities wouldn't have been lost on those early readers, and we don't want to lose sight of them either.

One important takeaway from the story is that it isn't about how much we give, but the motive behind it. Nor is it about gifts being obligatory, but rather voluntary.

They were free to give as much or as little of the proceeds as they chose. There was no need to lie. But the account relates how Ananias “kept back some of the proceeds” with his wife’s knowledge. This deception was the sin that Peter later rebukes: “How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!”

Perhaps at the heart of the sin that Peter rebuked is what filled Ananias: Was it the Holy Spirit or was it “Satan [who has] filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit”?

The rather stunning climax to the story is that immediately after Ananias gets this clarifying rebuke from Peter, “he fell down and died”—and Sapphira similarly perishes shortly thereafter. The reader naturally asks, Did God make this happen? Mary Baker Eddy explains that it is sin that destroys itself. As if she were describing the encounter between Peter and Ananias, she writes, “When we deny the authority of sin, we begin to sap it; for this denunciation must precede its destruction” (*Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 63).

That makes the story relevant to us today. Whether it’s giving to our church, our family, or a nonprofit we want to support, what motivates our giving? Is it a desire to appear generous or to actually help others? We can’t be shortchanged in giving, since the source of good is our infinite God.

How fearless are we in sharing the abundance we’ve received with others? Again, Paul addressed this very point when he wrote to the Corinthians, “I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality” (II Corinthians 8:13, 14).

Once again, the Bible guides us in not only giving but our motive for doing so. Can we embrace Barnabas’ fearless generosity, trusting that as we give freely, we

participate in a divine exchange that ensures no one is left in want, including ourselves?

Finding spiritual light, even in the Bible’s “darkest” stories

By David S. Hauck

There’s a story in the book of Acts that I don’t recall seeing in the Christian Science Bible Lesson. I don’t recall hearing it read during a Wednesday testimony meeting, either. In fact, when I was preparing to write this article, I could find only fleeting references to it in the archives of *The Christian Science Journal*, *Sentinel*, and *Herald*. It’s about a couple who perish and are then buried—not exactly a story most people may be looking for while sitting in the pews. So it seemed strange that I was led to read it in the early morning hours during a difficult personal time, when chills filled my body from head to toe. But it healed me quickly and thoroughly. It spoke to me in a way that, even if Luke (the author of Acts) intended its message to be far different, met my needs very specifically two thousand years later.

In the months since, this experience has helped me understand more completely that the spiritual sense of the Bible is the only message that matters, even—especially!—in narratives that seem dark and troubling. The spiritual sense of the Scriptures is how God speaks to us, and how we can be healed.

As I was shivering that morning and feeling generally troubled about the future, I yearned to feel more of God’s grace. I understand the Bible to be the very Word of God, so I knew His grace would be found there. I opened my Bible and landed on Acts 5. The beginning of the chapter is a brief interlude in a larger account of the apostles, telling of a husband and wife, Ananias and Sapphira, who met with a terrible end after they held back some of the proceeds of a property sale

that they claimed they had donated to the church. I wondered how this story could possibly bring healing, since nothing about it matched my situation, but I trusted that God was telling me something important.

Prior to this story, Acts 3 and 4 tell of Peter and John healing the lame man at the Temple gate called Beautiful, and afterward being imprisoned and persecuted. Even while this was happening, more followers of Jesus were added to their numbers.

Toward the end of Acts 4 it says, “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart” and “Great grace was upon them all” (verses 32, 33). Believers began selling their land and houses, giving the proceeds to the apostles to be used in forwarding the new Christian movement. They were giving up everything for Christ. The idea of “selling” their possessions was translated to my thought as my being able to “sell” what I didn’t need—let go of any doubts or fears about how my personal issue would be resolved, and turn everything over to God.

Acts 5 then tells of the couple’s dishonesty, which Peter discovers. While the story’s original intent may have been a warning against duplicity, it spoke to my thought in a completely different way. It immediately brought to mind when Jesus says that “nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad” (Luke 8:17). To me, the spiritual sense of Peter’s discovery was that my needs were not hid from God. He already knew them, as He always does. In Matthew, Jesus says, “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (6:8). I wasn’t struggling on my own. God wasn’t distant or aloof, waiting for me to come to Him. He was actively rescuing me. He knew exactly what I needed, both at that moment and going forward.

After this, the couple in the story fall dead—not the healing message I was expecting! But at this point I was no longer following the literal storyline at all. Rather, Ananias and Sapphira symbolized all of my concerns, and I suddenly felt assured that those concerns would be “carried out” and “buried” (see Acts 5:6)—God would completely and thoroughly resolve them, so even if

I didn’t know all the details yet, I didn’t have to be worried about them anymore.

With that, the shivering stopped and did not return.

What became clear to me that morning was that, as Mary Baker Eddy states in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, “The one important interpretation of Scripture is the spiritual” (p. 320). She also writes: “The literal rendering of the Scriptures makes them nothing valuable, but often is the foundation of unbelief and hopelessness. The metaphysical rendering is health and peace and hope for all. The literal or material reading is the reading of the carnal mind, which is enmity toward God, Spirit” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 169).

The spiritual sense of Scripture is the “new tongue” that brings “signs following”—healing. If read literally, as just a story of transgression and punishment, the account of Ananias and Sapphira could lead to “unbelief and hopelessness.” But the spiritual sense of the story that came to me—that God knows all, that we can turn everything over to Him, and that He will resolve our problems so completely and thoroughly as to eliminate all doubt of His benevolent care—is a powerful message in the face of any problem.

So next time you open the Bible to a story of a giant being decapitated with his own sword, or a tower collapsing and crushing sinners, don’t immediately flip the page. Listen for what God is really telling you—discern the new tongue speaking in relation to those passages. The “dark” stories of the Bible, when read literally, can be confusing and seem to fly in the face of the God that is Love itself, which Jesus’ life, wisdom, and works, and the Science Mrs. Eddy discovered, reveal to us. But when understood spiritually, the messages in these accounts are profound, and help us see how the belief of evil, which can feel like concrete reality in the form of sickness or sin, can be buried permanently.

The righteousness that blesses

By Andrea Jenks McCormick

The word **righteousness** is used about three hundred times in the Bible. Isaiah wrote, “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isaiah 32:17). Paul likened it to a breastplate—the most protective piece of armor (see Ephesians 6:14). And our Master said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy further elevates its importance when she notes that in Hebrews 1:9, “The cause given for the exaltation of Jesus ... was that he ‘loved righteousness and hated iniquity’” (p. 313).

What is this spiritual quality that Jesus’ beatitude says will bless us?

While today many think of the word *righteousness* in a negative sense, connecting it with self-righteousness and judgmentalism, most dictionaries first define it positively, in terms of living in accord with the divine or moral law. One Bible-based dictionary shows it to be an expression of and love for divine law. That definition reads in part, “conformity of heart and life to the divine law,” and further says, “It includes all we call justice, honesty and virtue, with holy affections” (Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828).

Our Leader indicates the power of this pure love for God’s law when she writes, “The will of God, or power of Spirit, is made manifest as Truth, and through righteousness,—not as or through matter,—and it strips matter of all claims, abilities or disabilities, pains or pleasures” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 185).

OF GOOD REPORT

Scam thwarted

By Osceola Davis-Smith

In **Mary Baker Eddy’s book** *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, she wrote: “Honesty is spiritual power. Dishonesty is human weakness, which forfeits divine help” (p. 453). This passage is very inspiring to me and is one that I cherish.

A few years ago, it played a role in a story I have to tell. At the time, my laptop had recently received a significant online update from a major company, and I was grateful.

Shortly afterward, looking over my emails, I noticed a bill from the company for the service they had recently completed. I was surprised because my tech package included that specific service without extra charge. I was confused, so I called the number on the page. The kind voice on the other end apologized and admitted that there had been a mistake and said that they would refund the money, which I had mistakenly been charged. The initial procedure began as before, with permission to access my laptop, this time for them to make the “necessary correction.”

Observing the operator’s path on my screen, I began to wonder why he was heading in a direction that had nothing to do with refunding money—instead, he appeared to be heading toward my personal files. I prayed for guidance because the person now had control of my computer. I could not afford to be afraid but had to know that divine Mind, the true intelligence, was actually governing this situation.

I remained calm with the kindly voiced man on the phone. I didn’t want to accept the thought that he meant any harm to me or to himself, and I prayed to know that we both were being embraced by our divine Father-Mother God, all-harmonious, who was guiding.

But it became quite clear that he was looking for other material on my laptop. Before he opened the final folder

to my personal files, I tried to close the window he was using but found no way to do that. Instead, I began to try to impede his progress. For example, when he told me to click “Allow,” I clicked “Deny.” He asked me if I was doing anything on my end. I said, “Yes,” and that I didn’t want him to go any further. He tried to assure me that he was honestly trying to get to the place where he could get me the money they had taken and return it. Then I would need to sign a release. That sounded even more threatening. All this time I was praying for God’s comforting, safe guidance and to see the man as truly the perfect child of God’s creation.

One could say that there literally was an online battle between us. This experience was something quite new to me, as my technology knowledge is rather limited. But I knew I was being divinely guided.

I softly hung up the phone, and then I felt led to simply turn off my laptop. The man on the phone called back and asked what I had done because he could not see my screen anymore. I repeated that I did not trust what was going on. He said, “Just turn on your machine,” and that he would take it from there. I gently hung up the phone and didn’t turn the laptop back on.

Then I called the company directly with the number that I had in my records and explained what had happened. A lady confirmed that it was a scam. She gave me an appointment for the next hour, and I took my laptop into a store for informative, protective service. The technician found nothing threatening and praised me for acting as I did. The gentleman said that I had “dodged the bullets of definite problems.” He congratulated me on my quick reactions and suggested that I change my password both to my laptop and my phone, which I did.

In *Science and Health* we read, “Trials are proofs of God’s care” (p. 66). We’re also reminded that we should allow the model of God’s perfect man to remain constantly in our thoughts.

The first line of the spiritual interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer as found in *Science and Health* is, “Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious” (p. 16). In my thought, the perfect model includes that God is not only my protector but also my provider—a strong, fearless,

omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Father. I also see God as my loving, tender, gentle, patient, comforting, encouraging, joy-bestowing, health-assuring Mother. Since my divine Father-Mother includes all of these eternal qualities, I, and all of Her children, have inherited the same, immutable characteristics. Error, in any form, including that of what may seem to be schemers, has no power to change that which is divinely bestowed. God never made a schemer.

This experience awakened me to the need to do prayerful work about scams and dishonesty. As I ponder the above spiritual truths, it is my sincere desire to realize on a daily basis that God never, ever, made a dishonest, sneaky individual. I pray that I will stay alert to a potential scam and that God will guide me to properly protect myself, and that others will feel God’s love guiding them as well. Jesus said, “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:37).

God blesses all. And such blessing can even heal a potential scammer. In closing, another cherished citation from *Science and Health* is a standard for me: “We must form perfect models in thought and look at them continually, or we shall never carve them out in grand and noble lives. Let unselfishness, goodness, mercy, justice, health, holiness, love—the kingdom of heaven—reign within us, and sin, disease, and death will diminish until they finally disappear” (p. 248).

LIVING CHURCH

Our role in fulfilling the mission of *The Christian Science Monitor*

By Christa Case Bryant

In another era of fake news, a group of reporters came to Concord, New Hampshire, to dig up dirt on a prominent national figure: Mary Baker Eddy, who had founded a new Protestant religion dedicated to fulfilling

Jesus' promise, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" (John 14:12). Following the example of his disciples and the early Christians who for several hundred years had done great healing work, she and her church had attracted many with their track record of Christian healing—and this had prompted sensationalist press coverage.

"We didn't believe anything but the worst about anybody," Louis Weadock, a star reporter for the *New York Herald*, later told Adela Rogers St. Johns, a fellow journalist. "And we wanted if possible to hold Mrs. Eddy up to scorn and ridicule, to expose and denounce her if we could" (see Yvonne Caché von Fettweis and Robert Townsend Warneck, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer*, Amplified Edition, pp. 378–384). The man Mrs. Eddy assigned to deal with the press was Irving Tomlinson. He recalled in a written account that she gave him a message for the "leading man" of this group of reporters, who had a long-standing, "extremely painful growth on his throat" that his colleagues believed may have been cancerous.

When Mr. Tomlinson called and asked for the head man, Mr. Weadock answered and said he "was too ill to come, could not come, and could not speak if he did come to the telephone, and could not speak any way." But Mr. Tomlinson reiterated his request to speak to him because Mrs. Eddy had instructed him to be sure to talk to the chief man directly. The man came to the phone reluctantly and listened. When he turned away from the phone, "he not only could speak perfectly, but was healed" (see Irving C. Tomlinson, *Twelve Years with Mary Baker Eddy*, Amplified Edition, pp. 69–71).

Healed.

Are we approaching the news—including those who drive it and the journalists who write about it—with the kind of love Mary Baker Eddy expressed for this man, who had apparently been wanting to vilify her in one of New York's biggest newspapers? It struck me that this love is foundational to her vision for *The Christian Science Monitor*, which she established the following year. The object of the paper, she wrote in its first edition, would be "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 353).

At this similarly fraught time in media today, negativity, cynicism, self-righteousness, unproductive influences, and even hatred confront anyone who engages with the news, whether journalists or readers or newsmakers. There seem to be so many complex, weighty topics facing humanity, and so many channels through which to discuss, debate, or bemoan them—whether traditional media or 24/7 cable news or social media.

But we all have an opportunity to elevate our views of the people and issues in the news, through fulfilling Christ Jesus' teaching: to love our neighbor as ourselves.

A lawyer once asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" This was after Jesus had asked him what was written in the religious law. And the lawyer had replied: to love God with all one's heart, and to love one's neighbor as himself. This lawyer knew the letter of the religious law, but seemed to be lacking the spirit of it. Yet, he apparently had a yearning to understand. Jesus responded to the question of "Who is my neighbor?" by telling the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25–37).

This parable provides a beautiful example of caring for our fellow man, and it can apply to how we approach the news, whether it's someone we're reading about, or the journalist who authored a piece, or someone we know whose choice of news or interpretation of it we don't agree with.

The parable of the good Samaritan is about a man who was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho. The man fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and left him half dead.

If someone starts to lose their way due to misinformation, disinformation, or highly polarized news coverage, we could say they have "fallen among thieves." We need to guard our own thought and support others in not being robbed of natural intelligence, critical thinking skills, or dignity by people who attempt to manipulate and strip anyone of their God-given "self-government, reason, and conscience"—which Mrs. Eddy identifies as "inalienable rights" (see *Science and Health with Key to*

the Scriptures, p. 106). Some may feel wounded, deeply saddened, or even incapacitated by fear or anger over the direction their city, their country, or the world is going. This may erode one's natural ability to carry on their life with purpose and direction, strength and freedom. And some may even have abandoned or been abandoned by friends or family because of what they believe or the way they've engaged with the news.

So in Jesus' telling of the parable, who was there to help the man who'd been greatly harmed? Soon enough a priest came that way. And he saw the injured man, but passed by on the other side. Then came a Levite, whose tribe was responsible for enforcing the many religious laws regarding worship in the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, and he also looked at this man but passed by on the other side. Then came a Samaritan. What did he do? There's a wonderful list of verbs: *came; saw; had compassion; bound up (his wounds); poured in (oil); brought (to an inn); took care; gave*.

Have we ever felt like that man lying along the road, and seen others pass by as if they thought we were unworthy or our situation hopeless? Or when we've seen someone like that man—literally or metaphorically—did we pass by on the other side, perhaps latently blaming them for getting into such a predicament? If we approached someone hurt, or struggling because of news they've consumed, was it to criticize and dismiss or to have compassion? Did we reopen their wounds or bind them up and pour in healing ideas? Did we have the generosity of heart to go on a detour with them and take care of them, and be willing to invest as much as necessary of our own resources until they were made whole again?

In short, to what extent are we approaching ourselves or other individuals in such a state with a healing motive of love, as Mrs. Eddy did? Are we bringing healing to their lives—and ours?

In an article called "The Way," Mrs. Eddy describes three qualities necessary for Christian healing: self-knowledge, humility, and love (see *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, pp. 355-359). These are vitally applicable to how we think about and engage with the news, and our neighbors.

First, self-knowledge: Christ Jesus talks in the Sermon on the Mount about the importance of removing the beam or log in our own eye before pointing out the mote or sawdust in our brother's eye.

Second, humility: This is so important for both journalists and those reading, watching, or listening to the news, particularly news featuring people whose viewpoints are diametrically opposed to ours.

And lastly, love: One expression of this is the *Monitor's* journalistic Golden Rule of injuring no man but blessing all mankind. That includes being as fair as possible—representing a wide range of viewpoints in a respectful and thoughtful way, and with wisdom and appropriate context.

If there is something that needs to be uncovered and addressed, it is to be done in such a way that it can be seen as impersonal evil, a manifestation of the carnal mind that St. Paul talks about. Rather than attack an individual personally, *Christian Science Monitor* journalism endeavors to approach coverage with the hope (and quiet conviction) that everyone can ultimately fulfill God's purpose for them.

This commitment to fairness also blesses readers because they get a more nuanced view of these individuals and their thoughts and actions, and can separate evil from people and therefore pray about it more effectively rather than being roused to anger or indignation. And it blesses journalists, because it disciplines us to put our own views to the side and sincerely try to understand people and situations.

So striving for fairness in how we engage with others is important, and rewarding. A deeper question might be: "How can I approach the news and newsmakers with love?" "How can I bring healing to this situation?"—as Mrs. Eddy prayerfully did behind the scenes with that reporter in Concord.

Journalist Adela Rogers St. Johns said that Mr. Weadock related to her how Mrs. Eddy's instantaneous healing of his colleague's throat condition "completely changed [the reporters'] outlook on Christian Science, and swung them very decidedly over to a fair viewpoint in the proceedings, and animated them with a real desire

to be fair in dealing with Mrs. Eddy and in fact made them hope that she would be thoroughly vindicated”—which she was.

It's beautiful that the Christian love and healing came first, and then the fairness—not the other way around. Being fair is not a mechanical step toward love; it is the outgrowth of love. Such love lifts us above the fray, whether we're reporting, editing, or reading the news.

As journalists, readers, and subscribers of *The Christian Science Monitor*, we all have the opportunity to pray for and bring healing to the world. And as such, we have a vital role to play in prayerfully addressing challenges, with self-knowledge, humility, and love.

This is the standard of divine Love that anchors, supports, and forwards the *Monitor's* object “to injure no man, but to bless all mankind.”

Christa Case Bryant

Editor, The Christian Science Monitor

New *The Christian Science Monitor* app

By Kenny D'Evelyn

Mary Baker Eddy founded *The Christian Science Monitor* as a daily newspaper that would “spread undivided the Science that operates unspent” (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 353). I've grown to appreciate a natural connection between the *Monitor's* cadence and its mission. By creating a daily news publication, Mrs. Eddy provided both a mechanism for and a reminder to Christian Scientists to participate in spreading Science—through consistently praying each day for whatever needs healing in the world. Could it be that the *Monitor's* cadence invites us—each day—to recognize that our prayers for ourselves and our prayers for the world are actually linked and therefore can't be disjoined or divided? Or in other words, we practice Science most

effectively in our own lives when we're also making a conscious effort to do so for the world.

Today, the way most of us consume news looks different than it did in 1908. But the importance of gathering facts and making our own well-reasoned conclusions about world events—again, in helping us pray effectively about them—is just as vital. That's why the *Monitor* is launching an app for smartphones in late January. We hope the convenience of accessing newly published stories throughout your day will support your efforts to embrace the world in your daily practice of Christian Science.

The app's design includes an updated look that honors both our roots and our journalism. The nameplate for the refreshed look was inspired by the original editorial page from 1908, including the wheat sheaf designed at Mrs. Eddy's request, as well as the color palette drawn from a wheat field. The design also aims to convey what *Monitor* journalists strive to be in their reporting: calm, purifying, and nonsensational. This new look will roll out in all *Monitor* products in early 2026.

Knowing that Christian Scientists around the world are praying to affirm the *Monitor's* unique role in leavening conversation and thought, and in bringing healing where it's most needed, is tremendously encouraging. The *Monitor* will only be successful to the extent that it is a collective demonstration of our worldwide church movement.

Feedback about how these products are working for you—and especially about how they're supporting your individual practice of Christian Science—is much appreciated.

Kenny D'Evelyn

Managing Publisher, The Christian Science Monitor

Grants available for branch church and society needs

By The Trustees Under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy

The Trustees of the trust under the will of Mary Baker Eddy, Clause 8, frequently evaluate grant requests from Christian Science branch churches and societies around the world. Many of these requests involve funding for repairs of older edifices—sometimes for buildings designed many decades ago that are outsize compared to the current number of members serving in the branch. We see branches prayerfully considering whether their building is truly serving the healing mission of their church, or if it's distracting from this ministry to their community.

If your branch membership is interested in exploring a different location or building arrangement, there may be Clause 8 funds available to help achieve that goal. Perhaps your branch could benefit from a bridge grant to help during a transition from one space to another. Or perhaps your branch could use funds to help build out a new space or even to hire a consultant to help explore your options. Grants will be considered for rightsizing projects in cases where the transition to a more appropriately scaled church edifice would enhance the branch's ability to reach, serve, and bring healing to the community, as well as enable ongoing building operations and maintenance to be sustainable for the branch.

In addition to projects related to rightsizing or relocating your edifice, the Trustees Under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy grant program will continue to provide support for a variety of other projects to aid branch efforts in offering welcoming, healing church services, testimony meetings, Sunday Schools, Reading Rooms, and lectures that meet the criteria of promoting and extending the religion of Christian Science as taught by Mary Baker Eddy.

We invite branches to inquire about guidelines and eligibility for a Clause 8 grant by email (tuwgrants@csps.com) or telephone (+1-617-450-2000).

The Trustees Under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy

Admission of New Members

By Martha R. Moffett

Dear Members,

We are delighted and grateful to be able to share with you the happy news of the recent admission of new members to The Mother Church from around the world. New members to our worldwide family come from Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Taiwan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Zimbabwe. Their applications were sent in English, French, German, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Each new member joins in supporting the activities and resources with which The Mother Church embraces the world, and each member is, in turn, embraced in The Mother Church's special love of its members.

Some of these activities and resources include:

- our Pastor, the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy;
- the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, available in 16 languages;
- authorized teachers of Christian Science offering Primary class instruction;
- the Christian Science periodicals, including *The Christian Science Journal*, *Christian Science Sentinel*, *The Herald of Christian Science*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*, to which we welcome your contributions of articles and testimonies of healing and for which the *Church Manual* provides, "It shall be the privilege and duty of every member, who can afford it, to subscribe for the periodicals which are

the organs of this Church; and it shall be the duty of the Directors to see that these periodicals are ably edited and kept abreast of the times" (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 44);

- other resources, such as Christian Science Reading Rooms, youth and church summits, Annual Meeting, and much more.

As always, our sincere gratitude goes out to all members and Christian Science teachers who support the admission of new members through their prayers, as well as by approving and countersigning applications as specified in the *Church Manual* (see pp. 35–38, 109–110).

Applications for membership are welcome at any time. The next admission of new members will take place on June 5, 2026. Completed applications must be received by the Office of the Clerk no later than the end of the business day (4:00 p.m. Boston time) on June 3, 2026.

With Christlike love,

Martha R. Moffett, Clerk of The Mother Church

Monthly updates: January 2026

New "In-Context" feature in the Digital Edition of the *Christian Science Quarterly*

Subscribers to the online version of the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons can now study in context without leaving the Digital Edition. They can view Lesson citations and their larger context from the pastor side by side, or switch back and forth with a single tap. This updated feature keeps the Full-Text and In-Context views at hand, supporting deeper study and understanding.

New Bible Resources in Reading Rooms

Now available for sale in Christian Science Reading Rooms is *The Bible Atlas: A Pictorial Guide to the Holy Lands*, published by DK. This atlas for young people explores key events from the Old and New Testaments with detailed maps, colorful illustrations, and photographs. It retells Bible stories alongside descriptions of ancient life, highlighting locations such as the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. The book includes timelines and accessible, historically informed explanations. Price: \$20.00.

This new atlas joins several new Bibles and Bible study tools that have become available from The Christian Science Publishing Society within the past year. These are now available in Reading Rooms to support a deeper exploration of the Bible. Other new titles include *The New Interpreter's Bible One-Volume Commentary*, published by Abingdon Press (priced at \$89.00), and two leather Clarion Reference Bibles published by Cambridge University Press (King James Version, priced at \$130.00, and New International Version, priced at \$140.00). We've also begun selling an economical NIV Bible published by American Bible Society (priced at \$13.00). Note that these new Bibles from other publishers do not have markers or bindings matching *Science and Health*.

More information about these titles can be found at your local Reading Room or on the Online Shop at shop.christianscience.com.

See more content from the Living Church sections in this magazine and in the *Christian Science Sentinel* at journal.christianscience.com/living-church.

Shoulder to shoulder: Publishing the good news of God's love

By The Editors

Everything any of us needs to learn to practice Christian Science is contained within the Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, which bring to light the most vital, spiritual meaning of the Scriptures. But whether we are new or seasoned students of these teachings, as we strive to put them into practice, it's both helpful and comforting to learn how others are doing the same. We're grateful that, along with the complete statement of Christian Science in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mrs. Eddy was animated by divine Love to provide the means by which Christian Scientists could both hear others' inspiration and healings and share their own. Those means are the magazines she established, to each of which she gave its own mission. In her words, "The first was *The Christian Science Journal*, designed to put on record the divine Science of Truth; the second I entitled *Sentinel*, intended to hold guard over Truth, Life, and Love; the third, *Der Herold der Christian Science*, to proclaim the universal activity and availability of Truth; ..." (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 353).

Those missions will never change. Today, it falls on us to advance the fulfillment of those missions. "Us" certainly includes those of us who edit and publish the articles and audio you read and listen to. But it also includes you, spiritual seekers working to put the teachings of Christian Science into practice in your own lives. Since the inception of each magazine, readers have also been contributors.

Mrs. Eddy wrote of her students, "Methinks, were they to contemplate the universal charge wherewith divine Love has entrusted us, in behalf of a suffering race, they would contribute oftener to the pages of

this swift vehicle of scientific thought; for it reaches a vast number of earnest readers, and seekers after Truth" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, pp. 155-156). Through her writings, it could be said that all of us are her students, and we owe it to humanity to write or record for the periodicals she established.

Mrs. Eddy also instructed that these magazines be "kept abreast of the times" (*Manual of The Mother Church*, p. 44). Keeping abreast calls for continual monitoring of worldwide trends in thought, and then shining the light of Christ, the true idea of God, on those trends. This light reveals where the strong roots of divine good are bringing forth the practical expression of qualities like kindness, mercy, spiritual strength, forgiveness, humility, and love for each other. It also reveals where corrections need to be made, where a higher sense of right, based on divine Principle, Love—other names for God—needs to be established.

But keeping abreast of the times doesn't just mean keeping the content fresh and relevant. It also means keeping up with current modes of presentation. For the last few decades, it hasn't just been about print. It has also been about audio and, more recently, ensuring online access to all our written and audio offerings.

You may have read about or seen some changes and updates recently made to the *Journal* and the *Christian Science Sentinel*. Some of these changes can be seen in the print issues, but they are most noticeable online. On a practical level, the changes are intended to make the websites easier to access and navigate. At a mission level, the changes aim to ensure that the published content is more immediately relevant to readers' day-to-day practice of Christian Science, church experience, and desire to bring healing to the world.

As editors and, more importantly, fellow Christian Scientists, we cherish our Leader's provision for the movement she established. We are continually praying to be guided on how best to carry the missions of these periodicals she established forward. And we're grateful that we're not alone in this; that you, who also love Christian Science and want to see it succeed, are in it with us.

We don't claim to have been perfect in all that we've done, and so, as well as loving to receive readers' appreciative comments, we are grateful when you send us constructive criticism. And together, we can support the periodicals through the thoughts we entertain about them. We can know that the spiritual animus behind these periodicals is perfect, so just as Love guided Mrs. Eddy to found them, Love is animating each of us today to value them and turn to their pages for healing ideas.

As these magazines point out in every issue, in reality we are each Love's own spiritual self-expression. And Love is inspiring us, as Her expression, to write or record articles, testimonies, and poems that will bless our worldwide friends and neighbors, as well as ourselves. Because Love is ever being Love, the inspiration Love provides will forever be fresh and new, thus keeping the church's periodicals ever fresh and new, as Love demands.

You, the readers, writers, and audio guests of the Christian Science periodicals, are just as much on this team as we are! And we are also each metaphysicians, prayerfully supporting the fulfillment of the missions our Leader gave for these magazines. We are proud and deeply grateful to be working shoulder to shoulder with you to give the world consistent, strong, inspiring, healing content that shows what Christian Science can do and is doing for mankind.

The Editors

A joyous reunion

By Starr Urbatsch

One of the things I love about Christian Science is its simplicity. Let me share a healing that illustrates this.

Before recently retiring, I worked at a botanical garden. Part of my responsibilities included watching over our feral cat community. One day I received word that one

of the cats had a severe leg injury and needed immediate attention. The supervisor asked that I take the cat to an emergency clinic. The loving staff there took care of him and 24 hours later were ready to release him. However, the veterinarian strongly recommended he not go back to the garden as a permanent home and said he needed time to recuperate from his injury. My husband and I decided to adopt him.

A few days after we got the cat home, however, he got away from us and disappeared outside. We were devastated and felt an overwhelming sense of guilt. How would he ever find us again? Would he be all right? Fear engulfed me. This was when I remembered the many healings I'd had from simply dealing first with fear. Mary Baker Eddy says this in her chapter "Christian Science Practice" from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients. Silently reassure them as to their exemption from disease and danger. Watch the result of this simple rule of Christian Science, and you will find that it alleviates the symptoms of every disease" (p. 411).

I've learned through my study of Christian Science that allowing fear free reign in our thinking can trick us into giving something power it simply doesn't have. The real power—the only power—belongs to our Father-Mother God, who is Love itself, and when intense fear keeps me from realizing Her presence, I reach out to a Christian Science practitioner for support in prayer.

When I contacted a practitioner, he assured me that the cat receives its sense of belonging from God, so it knows where it belongs. We are each (the cat included) called by God to our God-appointed home. Wherever that is, we find safety, food, and shelter. This was a divine law of good and I could trust it was operating at all times. I prayed with these ideas for a few days and felt some comfort but still had some lingering fear, as all our efforts to find the cat hadn't worked. I reached out to the practitioner again and felt reassured that the cat was safe in God's care. I immediately felt released from all fear and left the cat completely in God's loving embrace.

Two months later when I entered my backyard, the cat was sitting on our back fence. He hopped down to greet me showing no sign of a leg injury. It was as if no time had passed. That was over a year ago and ever since he's been part of our family.

Fearless flying

By Carla Simpson-Webb-Dardamanis

Many years ago, my career in fashion retail required many airline flights to visit stores, vendors, and factories worldwide. On one of my earliest flights, the plane was hit with lightning and lost power. We plunged sharply before the power recovered. Thankfully there was no further issue and harmony was restored. However, my fear was so great that I didn't feel I could get on my connecting flight. I actually had thoughts that I would have to just live in that location!

Realizing that was not a reasonable thought, I called a Christian Science practitioner, and we began praying to understand God's continuous government of good, His law of harmony, and His love for His idea, man. I spent the time on that next flight thinking about Mary Baker Eddy's poem "Mother's Evening Prayer." I found so much comfort in the ideas in that poem, and it has become my favorite source of inspiration in the 35 years since that incident, especially when flying.

The poem begins, "O gentle presence, peace and joy and power" (*Poems*, p. 4). That combination—gentle presence, peace, joy, and power—is characterized as belonging to God. It doesn't occur in any material sphere. It so perfectly represented God's total government that I could rely on to meet every need.

The poem goes on, "O Life divine, that owns each waiting hour." That gave wings to further inspiration and uplift. It isn't human luck or a plane that owns each hour; it is God who owns all. Continuing, the poem says, "Thou Love that guards the nestling's faltering flight! / Keep Thou my child on upward wing tonight."

It is always powerful to acknowledge God, divine Love, guarding the flight and all others in the sky.

My next flight that day went perfectly, without incident. More important, I had found strength from my prayer. If I couldn't tolerate flying, I would have had to abandon my career, and that was sobering. From that point on, I never got on a flight without the prayerful inspiration of that poem. I recognized how important it was to stay "at my post," praying for each flight. Prayer is never a burden—it is a joy of inspiration that brings harmony to our thoughts.

Several months later I was on a flight with a work group on a stormy night. Another passenger was under the influence of alcohol. She quite loudly kept announcing to everyone that we were going to die due to the storms. The flight attendants could not quiet her down.

As the plane departed, I turned to talk to her and provide some comfort. I shared that there was a divine presence, and we would be safe. We talked about how that presence of God would be guiding the pilots to make smart decisions. We ended up talking for the whole two-hour flight, and she remained calm. She no longer appeared intoxicated, and she and the flight attendants expressed gratitude for the help I was able to provide.

My coworkers later commented on how rough the flight had been. I was quietly surprised. I had not felt any disturbance on the flight, and I realized that because I had been focused on helping my fellow passenger feel safe, fear had not at any point entered my thought. I rejoiced to know that my healing of the fear of flying was complete.

I was again grateful for the earlier lesson to pray while flying, regardless of any specific alert, when I was on a flight from the West Coast of the United States through Tokyo to Hong Kong. It was a beautiful day with clear weather. However, as the flight got underway, I felt tension in the crew—something I've learned to recognize from all of my travels—and they were not relaxed for the whole flight. I stayed in prayer the whole way, about 12 hours.

As we neared Tokyo, the pilot came on to inform us that there was a problem with the landing gear. We would need to do a belly landing with the plane. When we made the turn for the Tokyo airport, we would see the runway foamed to prepare for such a landing and lined with emergency vehicles. The passengers were completely silent as everyone processed this information. I now knew why I had been in prayer and was so grateful to have obeyed. I wasn't panicked and knew that prayer prepared the way for harmony.

We were in the crash position when the pilot began the descent. A couple of minutes later we heard a joyful shout from the pilot: "We have landing gear!" There were cheers throughout the plane. We were diverted to a different runway and made a normal landing—in fact, it was one of the smoothest landings I have ever experienced. Even the pilots seemed amazed. Airport staff, clapping for us and shedding tears of joy, greeted us when we disembarked on the jetway.

I am grateful that in Christian Science we find a practical, reliable understanding of God and His love for us. And I will be forever grateful to Mary Baker Eddy for her dedicated work in bringing this Science to us. It is an amazing blessing to be able to lean on spiritual healing for all our needs.

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