



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

March 16, 2026 Vol. 128 | No. 11

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Spiritual wakefulness and healing

Larissa Snorek

When my teenage daughter realized she would be without her phone for an entire summer, her response caught me off guard: “It’s actually a relief!” I was surprised, not because she’s especially attached to her phone—though, like many of us, she rarely goes anywhere without it—but because her expression of relief was so genuine. She later said that the break from her phone made her more awake to her creative interests and to being fully present with others.

Her experience highlighted something important. If a simple break from our phone can open the door to greater mental awareness and presence, what would a deeper, spiritual wakefulness do for us? This is not just about being more attentive to our surroundings or relationships, but about being fully present in our oneness with God, mentally alert to the good that’s always at hand.

Mindless routines, familiar distractions, or merely emotional responses—worry, self-doubt, busyness—can dull our spiritual perception and have us drifting along in a mental fog. This is a subtle form of being mesmerized by modern life. In the Apostle Paul’s teachings to some early Christians, he appealed to them to “serve the Lord without distraction” (I Corinthians 7:35, New King James Version). Seeking to understand God better enables us to be more conscious of the ever-present activity of God as the one, infinite Mind than we are of the issues in our lives.

As we cultivate an active awareness of unfolding divine good through the rousing message of Christ—the true idea of God—not only does this keep us from mentally sleepwalking through the day, but it helps us become more awake to the vital reality and ever-presence of the divine Mind. Everyone, as God’s expression, reflects this infinite, spiritual consciousness and can find the

willingness to “bow before Christ, Truth, to receive more of his reappearing” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 35). Christly insights that transform our thinking and awaken us to divine goodness fuel and support our spiritual growth.

Being spiritually awake doesn’t just bless us, but makes us better and more effective healers. It is taking seriously the call for students of Christian Science to “keep themselves awake and waken the world” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Message to The Mother Church for 1902*, p. 17). Being spiritually awake means recognizing the true, divinely imbued individuality of others—especially in situations where it seems really difficult. Intentionally seeking to express Godlike qualities, such as kindness, honesty, strength, and intelligence, uplifts everyday life. We begin to see more spiritually—as God, Spirit, sees.

But when we feel a desire to help others awaken spiritually, we must begin by checking our own consciousness and our own understanding of God. Eddy’s response to a question about the role the healer plays in helping others gives some direction: “The honest student of Christian Science is purged through Christ, Truth, and thus is ready for victory in the ennobling strife” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 41).

No matter how long we’ve been practicing this Science of Christ, we are all still students. Being “purged through Christ”—being alerted to anything fear-based or separate from God in our thinking—is one way of awakening spiritually. It lifts us above the mental fog of worry, self-doubt, and idleness. Attaining and sustaining this alertness is the ongoing work of Christian salvation, and it shows the necessity of being willing to be regularly revitalized and renewed by the spirit of Christ that Jesus explained and proved.

In the Bible, we see that real awakening often begins when people challenge commonly held assumptions about life as mortal and material. Take the case of a man who had been ill for 38 years and lay helplessly beside a pool believed to hold curative powers, hoping to be able to access the waters that he thought would cure him (see John 5:2–9).

Jesus asked him if he wanted to be well. The man certainly did, but didn't see how it could happen. There was no one who could or would help him in the way conventional belief dictated—being first to be dipped in the pool when the water began to move. But Jesus saw the man as wholly spiritual, the image and likeness of God, Spirit. He told him to get up and walk. This instruction awakened the man's consciousness, and he immediately got up and walked—roused by the spiritual authority of Christ to see himself as God made him, already well and free.

Jesus' direction cut across cultural expectations and human reasoning. It pointed to the one ever-present, divine power that is not dependent on time, chance, or material conditions. And when the man obeyed, he was immediately healed. The blessing was already there, awaiting his recognition.

Anytime we think we're trudging along in a matter-based life, distracted by one thing or another from feeling present with God, Christ wakes us up to who we actually are and the true nature of our being as spiritual. And this not only helps our own life but also helps awaken the world to our eternal safety, love, and health in divine Love's presence and care for us.

Larissa Snorek, *Associate Editor*

Be not afraid!

Dealing with fear first clears away its mental mist so we can pray more effectively.

Jennifer McLaughlin

Christ Jesus regularly told his disciples and others not to be afraid. But erasing fear isn't always easy when it's coming at us in myriad ways, subtle as well as obvious. Yet, whether the challenge we're facing is physical, mental, financial, or something else, addressing fear in a spiritually scientific way is a key first step in Christian Science healing.

Why?

Before answering that question, it's worth noting how the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, underlines Jesus' counsel. In the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, she writes: "Christian scientific practice begins with Christ's keynote of harmony, 'Be not afraid!' . . .

"Always begin your treatment by allaying the fear of patients. Silently reassure them as to their exemption from disease and danger" (pp. 410–411).

Her instruction is so clear and strong. We're twice told to begin by addressing and allaying fear. It isn't an afterthought or an optional component. It's where we *begin*. So it must be important.

One big reason we strive to banish fear is that it undermines our ability to focus on God. Yet focusing on God enables our prayers to be more confident, productive, and successful. Fear also masks or hides what really needs to be addressed. And it claims to take over thought, making clear thinking more difficult. Dealing with fear first clears away its mental mist so we can pray more effectively.

In her writings, Mrs. Eddy refers to "evil suggestions." Fear is certainly an evil suggestion, as there's nothing good or holy or healing about it. What's doing the suggesting? Often, it's a belief held strongly by many throughout the world, whether it appears in the news or is gossiped about on the sidelines of a school sporting event. Mrs. Eddy observes: "The press unwittingly sends forth many sorrows and diseases among the human family. It does this by giving names to diseases and by printing long descriptions which mirror images of disease distinctly in thought. A new name for an ailment affects people like a Parisian name for a novel garment. Every one hastens to get it" (*Science and Health*, pp. 196–197).

A simple analogy for the evil suggestion called fear is a common response to a house creaking in the middle of the night. The occupant awakes with a start and is immediately afraid. "What was the noise? Where did it come from? What could be the danger?" they wonder. But then common sense takes over, and fear is replaced

by the recognition, “Oh, that was just the house settling; there’s nothing to fear.” And they go back to sleep. Who or what caused the fear in that moment? The *suggestion* that there was danger, even though there was no actual threat.

We might say, “I’m afraid,” but a more accurate statement is, “The suggestion of fear coming to me right now is very strong, and it’s tempting to believe that it’s justified.” Well, it’s not justified. Why? Because God, good, alone is true, and He is the only power. Again and again in the Bible and Mrs. Eddy’s writings, we are shown the singleness and allness of God’s power and presence. We read in Psalms, “Power belongeth unto God” (62:11) and in Jeremiah, “Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee” (32:17).

It’s important to recognize that the evil suggestion of fear isn’t our thinking. It never belongs to us. Fear just masquerades as our thinking. Beginning our prayers by specifically addressing fear includes not identifying ourselves with that false suggestion. Fear is never ours, and we have divine authority to reject the suggestion outright. Mrs. Eddy writes, “He who refuses to be influenced by any but the divine Mind, commits his way to God, and rises superior to suggestions from an evil source” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 113). Recognizing fear as an impersonal suggestion helps us express dominion over it.

It’s also important to reject any temptation to judge ourselves or another when fear has crept into consciousness. That would focus on the fear itself, rather than address it directly through prayer, which obliterates it. Talking about fear doesn’t deal with it. Praying does. So, if you ever find yourself getting stuck on, “But I’m not supposed to be afraid,” you can stop and declare, “I am not afraid. God isn’t afraid, and I am made in God’s image and likeness, so I am fearless and well, and I know it.” This declaration leans on Christ Jesus’ promise, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

One time when I was in college, I was struggling with physical pain, and I called a Christian Science

practitioner to pray for me. I was almost paralyzed with fear that the pain wouldn’t stop. She quoted from the textbook, “Fear never stopped being and its action” (p. 151).

Then she said, “You go ahead and be as afraid as you want. God never stops God-ing.” I was so surprised that I laughed. It was really comforting, and the healing followed quickly.

Just because the suggestion of fear is present, that doesn’t disqualify us from being healed or redeemed. It’s true that we’re not supposed to be afraid. Yet God is the only power, so the apparent presence of fear does not stop God from being God and all-powerful.

We read in the Bible, “Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s” (II Chronicles 20:15). We are not beset by a “great multitude” of fear or despair of any kind; rather, we are forever upheld and strengthened by the power and presence of the one, infinite Mind, God.

The practitioner’s comment that I could be as afraid as I wanted to be because God would keep on God-ing helped me get out of my head about it. I had fallen into the trap of making healing conditional and about me. But healing is never personal, and God’s love for us isn’t conditional. As God’s forever reflection, each of us is already perfect and complete, whole and well. That never changes. And furthermore, God isn’t afraid, so we as His reflection aren’t afraid. That’s what it means to address fear: to recognize it as a suggestion from outside of us that has no power, no presence, no reality, and no validity, and to utterly reject it because God is the only power and is ever present.

So, yes, we always handle fear first. And we do it with dominion and joy!

Jesus commissions the twelve

Christ Jesus’ sending his disciples to preach and heal was a radical shift for these followers. Up to this time, the twelve had been listeners to Jesus’ teachings and witnesses to his cures. Now they were also deemed ready to spread his message and prove its truth.

For this assignment, they were directed solely to their fellow Jews. Jesus twice designated his people “lost sheep” (see Matthew 10:6 and 15:24, considered references to the prophecies in Isaiah 53:6 and Jeremiah 50:6). Although the Israelites had been unfaithful to God’s covenant, they were to receive the gospel first. (Gentile nations would be added after Jesus’ resurrection; see Matthew 28:18–20.)

Jesus’ injunction to the disciples not to charge for their work and to take no money or extra supplies meant that they were to depend on God’s provision (though he told them at a later time to take supplies; see Luke 22:35, 36). Their needs would be met partly by Jewish hospitality—not simply shelter and food but acceptance of the gospel message as well. Rejection of that “good news” was to be symbolically condemned by shaking the dust of that place from their feet.

“God selects for the highest service,” writes Mary Baker Eddy, “one who has grown into such a fitness for it as renders any abuse of the mission an impossibility. The All-wise does not bestow His highest trusts upon the unworthy. When He commissions a messenger, it is one who is spiritually near Himself” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 455).

For more on this topic, see “Preach the gospel, heal the sick” by Louie Allen, at cssentinel.com/preach-the-gospel or by scanning the QR code.

Sturdier investing—in financial endeavors, and in life

Our balance comes from a humble listening for the guidance of divine Mind.

Joe Gariano

With the constant stream of news about stock prices, interest rates, and economic forecasts, our daily lives can feel increasingly intertwined with the fluctuations of financial markets. And sometimes, this information paints an aggressive and fearful picture. I’ve learned that it’s so important to have a firm, spiritual foundation for our thinking. Students of Christian Science have the metaphysical tools to look past shaky forecasts and find our peace and security in God, unchanging divine Principle.

The Bible and the writings of Mary Baker Eddy provide a complete framework for this. Interestingly, I have found that some of the very concepts that have guided my own spiritual progress are echoed in the discipline of sound, long-term investing. By valuing the foundation of unchanging Principle, we can spiritualize our thinking about finances and the world.

Foundational discipline

Christian Science is not a passive belief system; it involves a daily, disciplined practice of spiritual study, prayer, and the demonstration of Truth, God. Mrs. Eddy says in her *Message to The Mother Church for 1900*, “The song of Christian Science is, ‘Work—work—work—watch and pray’” (p. 2). This foundational work enables us to be consistently conscious of Truth, which is requisite for spiritual growth.

Like a wise investor, who knows they must first have the discipline to save before they have the capital to invest, the discipline of our daily study and prayer helps

us have the “spiritual capital” we need to meet our challenges and address the world’s.

Active participation

Christian Science requires more than just quiet study; it calls for active participation in the world. Christ Jesus reminds us that “ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14). An investor understands that their capital must be actively and intelligently put to work in order to see a return. We need to actively express the qualities of God, good, in our homes, communities, churches, and work. Our spiritual understanding must be actively lived and shared to bring forth the fruits of healing.

Temperament over intellect

In the world of finance, many believe that temperament matters more than a high IQ. The ability to remain calm in a crisis, confident in a market downturn, and patient with the unfolding of what we know is true—this, more than intellect, can be the key to long-term success.

This is also true in our healing practice. We learn that it is not our human intellect that heals, but rather subduing the beliefs of the human mind through our acceptance of the reality of what Mrs. Eddy refers to in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as “the calm, strong currents of true spirituality, the manifestations of which are health, purity, and self-immolation” (p. 99). It is God-reflecting qualities such as patience, humility, and a deep, unconditional love that are essential and far more powerful than any amount of intellectual reasoning.

Taking the wider view

A successful investor learns to see the volatile “noise” of daily financial market fluctuations for what they are and to focus instead on the deep, long-term, fundamental value of their investments. This discipline is useful in our prayers, too. The daily news cycle presents a constant barrage of aggressive mental suggestions—including fears of conflict, lack, and division. Prayer enables us to cultivate the spiritual perspective that tunes out this sensory static, this

short-term noise, and replaces it with healthful healing truths about the eternally harmonious reality of God’s government.

This involves, in essence, entering the “closet” of prayer (see Matthew 6:6) and shutting the door on anything that would distract or confuse.

Maintaining balance

A skilled investor knows how to balance defensive assets that protect against loss with growth-oriented assets that seize opportunity. There is no loss of any of the goodness God gives. But a balanced spiritual life recognizes the need to, according to *Science and Health*, “stand porter at the door of thought” (p. 392), rejecting the claims of error, the mistaken thinking that would deny God’s omnipotence. This counsel continues, “Admitting only such conclusions as you wish realized in bodily results, you will control yourself harmoniously.” *Science and Health* also indicates that it’s important to “become as a little child” and “leave the old for the new” in order to be “receptive of the advanced idea” (pp. 323–324).

Our balance doesn’t come from human planning, but from a humble listening for the guidance of divine Mind.

The courage to be different

A “contrarian” investor has the courage to buy when others are panicking—to trust in their own deep, fundamental analysis rather than the emotionalism of the crowd. Jesus called his followers to be in the world, but not of it. This requires a different kind of courage, a profound moral courage. It is the courage to hold to a spiritual conviction of harmony and perfection when the physical senses are presenting images of discord or disease.

Holding this conviction provides dependable support for those in distress and positions us to go up higher.

Discerning which messages to accept

In the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy describes how mortal mind—a supposed mentality opposed to God—presents to human consciousness distorted concepts about God, man, and creation. Because God, immortal Mind, is the only Mind there is, mortal mind must be fictitious—unreal and meaningless.

In investing, it's crucial not to be swayed by the day's market price when you understand your investment's fundamental value. Likewise, in our practice of Christian Science, it's important that we turn away from what the mortal mentality is conveying and stay fixed on Godlike qualities and values.

Regardless of what the world may be presenting to us, the boasts of mortal mind that seem frightening and convincing have no power unless we agree to do mental business with these suggestions. But, while we don't have to engage with any of mortal mind's claims, we should not avoid engaging with the world. Our diligent prayers are the very space where we practice Christian Science, and we are provided with plenty of opportunities to prove God's allness, bless the world, and strengthen our own convictions. This is deeply valuable work.

LIVING CHURCH

“Uninvited guests” at a Reading Room?

I began to look forward to seeing how God would resolve the issue.

Brett Huffman

Several years ago, the Executive Board of the branch Church of Christ, Scientist, of which I was a member reported to the membership that our Christian

Science Reading Room was experiencing a “nightmare” scenario.

A routine termite inspection had uncovered some “uninvited guests”—an infestation that was ongoing and had caused structural problems with the building. The inspector reported that the building was in big trouble. The issue had to be addressed immediately.

This Reading Room is located in a beautiful area known for its summertime tourism. A major renovation was going to be difficult. We knew that the town building department would insist on it being done during non-peak tourist months, which would increase the risk of rain damage.

But the funding was maybe the scariest part of the problem. Repairs, estimated to require a very large sum, involved removing the slate roof, rebuilding the underlying structure, and returning the slate—all without impacting the downtown tourism on the street. Coming up with the needed amount of money seemed unattainable.

At the Executive Board's request, the membership immediately started a funding drive to try to cover the expense. This went on for several months, but only a fraction of the needed funds were collected.

About this time, I was voted on to the Board. It seemed like a terrible time to be in this position, because the challenge we were facing was so large. I wondered if we were destined to have to shut down the Reading Room permanently.

Obviously, my thoughts needed addressing first. I was fearful—even resentful—of the task put before us. I realized that the sense of burden I felt needed to be released. I remember a Christian Science practitioner suggesting that I work with this quote from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: “Blot out the images of mortal thought and its beliefs in sickness and sin. Then, when thou art delivered to the judgment of Truth, Christ, the judge will say, ‘Thou art whole!’” (p. 391).

While we weren't dealing with sickness or sin, this helped me recognize that mortal thought, or human

belief, was the place in which our Reading Room problem was being experienced and needed to be addressed. Discord never exists in God or His thoughts, His ideas. Praying in this way, I began to see that there was going to be a harmonious outcome, even though I didn't know how. My trepidation about being elected to the Board vanished. I began to look forward to seeing how God would resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, the Board came together to discuss our next actions. We decided that before we took any other steps, we would ask for a practitioner's help in praying for the Reading Room. We engaged a practitioner, who happily took up the case. She prayed each day to see that harmony was already established in our whole church.

Each week or two, the Board would meet on the issue. At first, we weren't feeling peaceful, and we just kept the prayer going.

Suddenly, one evening, everyone involved felt calm and peaceful about the situation. No one was stirred as they had been before. The Christly thought "Thou art whole" was shared with all the members.

With that change, it seemed to be the right time to have a reevaluation done of the property. We asked the same person who had found the termite damage for another inspection.

Afterward, the inspector was dumbfounded: Not only was the infestation gone, but the structural damage that he had previously documented was nonexistent. There were a few minor things to address, such as some damage around a window frame. However, there was no significant structural damage, such as what had been witnessed before.

He returned an amazing clean bill of health for our Reading Room, though he couldn't understand what had happened. He said that he had clearly seen the damage before. To me, his story was like those in testimonies of healing in which doctors who take a second X-ray after a Christian Science healing can't find the malady that had been pictured in the first X-ray.

Our members were ecstatic. We had estimates done and repairs made for the small issues. As further proof of

God's care, the cost of these repairs was very near what had already been collected by the earlier fund drive.

On hearing of this healing, a friend reminded me of this promise from *Science and Health*: "By lifting thought above error, or disease, and contending persistently for truth, you destroy error" (p. 400). As soon as we were lifted above fear, we saw a delightful restoration of harmony for our Reading Room.

Promise and fulfillment

James Walter

A faucet holds the promise of flowing water.
Turn on the tap,
and the promise is fulfilled
in a refreshing, uninterrupted stream.

Each day is like a faucet.
It holds the promise of increasing harmony.
We turn on the tap through prayer,
which opens thought
to divine Love's flood tide of ideas,
and find its ready fulfillment each moment
in full-flowing goodness.

YOUTH

How can I stop being influenced by what other people think?

John Biggs

Q: How can I stop being influenced by what my friends and others are thinking?

A: Throughout middle school, high school, and even most of college, I struggled with this very thing. It wasn't so much peer pressure as this overwhelming feeling that I needed to follow what my friends thought. Like if there was a girl I thought was cute, but my friends didn't like her (or, more honestly, if I *thought* my friends *wouldn't* like her), then there was no way I would consider talking to her.

I felt like two different people. When I was at home with just my family and maybe one or two friends around, I felt free and happy to be myself. But at school, I felt boxed in, and like I was trying to conform to whatever I thought other people thought I should be.

At the beginning of my fourth year in college, I had the opportunity to study abroad in France. I was very caught up in relationship challenges, fears about my prospects, and my dislike of school, and I was feeling trapped. I was trying to navigate life by what other people thought or what their expectations of me might be.

But one day in France, I had a transformational experience, which you can read about on JSH-Online.com (see "An always present Love, *The Christian Science Journal*, September 2010). As detailed in that article, I felt the immediacy of God's love in a way I'd never felt it before. The funny thing was, it didn't specifically answer any of the concerns or questions I'd had. But it shifted the entire premise of my outlook. I saw, for the first time, that my life was my own and that it was not at the mercy of what other people thought, did, or expected. Or, to be more accurate, spiritually, I saw that my life was God's and that it was safe in His love.

The shift that came from this realization was tremendous. I felt free! I'd had no idea how hard it had been to navigate all those different influences, but now that I was feeling so sure of God's love, I saw that it was the only thing I wanted to let govern me. And indeed, God, Love, is the only true power that governs any of us.

I'm reminded of how Christ Jesus responded when Pontius Pilate threatened him. Jesus said, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). In other words, "You

could have no power over me at all, unless God gave you that power."

Well, nothing against any of my friends, but God sure didn't put me in their hands. And, honestly, my friendships deepened quite a bit, once I saw that these friends were not governors of my life—which, of course, they probably never intended to be. But their good ideas could definitely inspire me as I figured out what was right for me.

Before, I'd felt I was constantly trying to adjust to what others might think on any given day, which can be like trying to follow trends that seem to change from moment to moment. But as I discovered that God's love is steady, not reactive to this person or that circumstance, there was a new steadiness that characterized my approach.

While Love does govern us fully, sometimes we might not be sure how to see that in our lives. For me, it's helpful to look at each day as an opportunity to feel and trust God's love more fully. His love doesn't waver, doesn't depend on the circumstances around us. God's guidance never has exceptions. Watching and listening for Love, we'll be less and less likely to give in to an influence that doesn't coincide with Love and the good it has for us and for all. This verse in the Bible encourages us: "Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is" (1 John 3:2, Common English Bible).

We may not be sure of each coming step or how our lives will grow and transform. But looking to God, recognizing Love as the sole power in our lives, we'll discover that there's no need to conform to what others think in order to feel loved, because we are already loved, already complete as Love's reflection.

God gives me good ideas

Charlie

My name is Charlie, and I like to practice listening to God. I've learned in Christian Science Sunday School that God is always speaking to us. I know God's voice in my thoughts because God is Love, and when I hear God, it makes me feel good.

God has told me lots of things that help me, so I know that when I hear God, I should pay attention. God gives me good ideas that help other people, too.

One time I listened to God was when we were getting ready to go to my cousin's birthday party. I was with Grammie, and she couldn't find the gift. So I asked God for help and then listened. I got the message that Grammie would find the present. Then she found it upstairs. We all had a fun time at the party.

In Sunday School, we always write down what we are grateful for. I am grateful that Grammie found my cousin's present and that I can always listen to God, no matter what.

TESTIMONIES OF HEALING

Quickly healed of effects of a fall

Bruce Richardson

My wife and I were visiting our son on the East Coast of the United States. After dark, he and I took his dog for a walk in a park near the ocean. As I looked out over the water at the beautiful harbor lights, I missed seeing a staircase in front of me. I fell, landing at the bottom of five concrete steps. My lower leg, hip, and head took most of the impact. When my head hit the concrete at the bottom of the stairs, things went black for a second. All I heard was, "Dad!"

I lay there for a minute, wondering what had happened. The next thing that came to thought was this familiar statement from the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "Accidents are unknown to God . . ." (p. 424). My son shared some comforting words as he tried to help me up, but my knee wasn't ready to bear weight. Fortunately, some other people were walking nearby, and a man helped my son get me back on my feet. After thanking the man for his help, we started back to my son's home.

Along the way, I thought, "If accidents are unknown to God, then what just happened?" After we arrived at his home, my son gently patched up the scrapes on my leg. Everyone else had gone to bed, so I had some quiet time to pray. I have had many healings in Christian Science, but I had never fallen before. This was an opportunity to reflect deeply on God's care for and protection of His children.

One day when I was a young teen, my mother was driving me to school when we saw two cars that had collided. She declared, "It never happened!" I challenged her, asking, "How can you say that? Look at those cars!" She replied, "Accidents are unknown to God, and we need to unsee it." Later that day, she shared with me the full passage from *Science and Health*: "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."

"Under divine Providence there can be no accidents, since there is no room for imperfection in perfection."

I had been attending Christian Science Sunday School since I was five, but this was new to me at the time. And over the years that followed, I had many opportunities to prove the truth of those statements. But now I needed to understand them on a different level. What did I need to see?

My prayers took me to page 397 of *Science and Health*, where I read: "When an accident happens, you think or exclaim, 'I am hurt!' Your thought is more powerful

than your words, more powerful than the accident itself, to make the injury real.

“Now reverse the process. Declare that you are not hurt and understand the reason why, and you will find the ensuing good effects to be in exact proportion to your disbelief in physics, and your fidelity to divine metaphysics, confidence in God as All, which the Scriptures declare Him to be.”

I needed to know that I was not hurt and understand the reason why. My wife helped me in this with her prayers. Having her love and supportive prayer has helped me through many problems.

I realized that if I could disbelieve in physics, stick to divine metaphysics, and trust in God as All, then I could “unsee” that fall down the stairs—know and prove that it never happened in spiritual reality. So, I did. I prayed to gain a clearer sense of my true identity as a child of God, Spirit—wholly spiritual and free from accident, injury, or pain. Within two days, I was walking normally and without pain, and I better understood my mother’s words, “It never happened!”

I am grateful for God’s loving care and protection in so many aspects of my life. Mrs. Eddy writes: “Stick to the truth of being in contradistinction to the error that life, substance, or intelligence can be in matter. Plead with an honest conviction of truth and a clear perception of the unchanging, unerring, and certain effect of divine Science. Then, if your fidelity is half equal to the truth of your plea, you will heal the sick” (*Science and Health*, p. 418).

We all can continue to do just that.

Bruce Richardson

St. Louis Park, Minnesota, US

Debilitating headaches healed

James Medley

Many years ago, I suffered from debilitating headaches, which usually occurred on days when I was off from work. I was a member of the United States Olympic sailing team, and the headaches also often happened when I was on my way to a major championship regatta.

On one occasion, I was driving to a North American championship event, towing my boat on a trailer, when one of these headaches started. It was around midnight during a 16-hour drive. I was listening to the radio at the time, and an interviewer started a discussion with a physician who specialized in treating headaches. The doctor went into a very detailed description of what he called a tension headache. His description of what leads up to this condition sounded like my experience.

In my study of Christian Science, I have learned that approaching problems with the understanding that I am spiritual, the likeness or reflection of God, Spirit, brings healing. That night, the thought came to me that if I was, in fact, spiritual, then this discomfort was not possible. Suddenly, the realization that this discomfort was impossible came to me very strongly, and it was clear that this pain couldn’t be part of my experience. At that moment, the headache disappeared.

This occurred forty years ago, and I have never again experienced that debilitating pain. Mary Baker Eddy states in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “Become conscious for a single moment that Life and intelligence are purely spiritual,—neither in nor of matter,—and the body will then utter no complaints. If suffering from a belief in sickness, you will find yourself suddenly well” (p. 14). This healing occurred precisely as a result of the consciousness of Life as purely spiritual.

James Medley

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Hearing restored

Deisy Ortiz

Originally published in Spanish

Through my study of Christian Science, I've learned that our God-bestowed faculties—such as seeing, hearing, listening, and perceiving—can never be lost or destroyed. Because they are the expression of divine Soul, they are spiritual, not material, and never subject to age, illness, or accident. They always remain intact.

In a recent Bible Lesson in the *Christian Science Quarterly*, I paid special attention to this citation: “The ‘divine ear’ is not an auditory nerve. It is the all-hearing and all-knowing Mind, to whom each need of man is always known and by whom it will be supplied” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 7).

For a year, I had been feeling discomfort in my right ear, and there were times when I couldn't hear well, especially when I put on my headphones to listen to the Lesson or an article on JSH-Online.com. At first I prayed sporadically about it, but as time went on I realized I needed to give more attention to addressing this problem.

One afternoon, I went with my granddaughter to the park, and while she played with her friends, I put on my headphones and listened to one of Julia Wade's hymns from her Spanish album *Alabado sea Dios*. Titled “El Amor,” or “Love,” the hymn includes this line: in English, “Those who love must always strive not to wound.” I felt so inspired hearing this and watching the children enjoy those moments together, running, laughing, and jumping. They were overflowing with happiness and feeling joy in harmony.

The hymn also says, “Love never thinks only of itself.” I knew that the love these children were expressing was a quality of Mind, and that the same spiritual sense that was within them was part of me, too. Therefore I was included in that joy and delight.

I also pondered Mrs. Eddy's spiritual definition of *children* in the Glossary of *Science and Health*: “The spiritual thoughts and representatives of Life, Truth, and Love” (p. 582). I knew I could not lose my identity as a child of God, so despite being an adult, I still maintained the same innocence that those children were expressing.

The joy I felt at that moment was so immense that my thought turned completely away from a false sense of myself as a material being with a hearing problem. Suddenly, I was able to hear perfectly out of that ear, and the discomfort was gone.

What had happened? Christian Science explains that when our thought is centered on a limited, personal sense of self, we cling to flawed human concepts and lose sight of our oneness with God. We give this false sense an identity and believe that something can harm its well-being. But acknowledging the divine Mind as our creator and appreciating the qualities we express as Mind's idea restores the true sense of self and the healthy function of the body, including our faculties.

When I saw that Mind does not include inharmony of any sort, and that Mind's expression, man, could not include inharmony either, it became clear that the hearing problem was unreal—an illusion. It disappeared, and I never again experienced this condition. Both ears have been working fine ever since.

I am very thankful to Mrs. Eddy for her discovery of Christian Science, and to the *Herald* for publishing inspiring articles and healings. My goal is always to listen for divine Truth to show me what needs to be removed from thought so it cannot hinder me from perceiving the ever-presence of good.

Deisy Ortiz

Bogotá, Colombia

Letters & Conversations

Susie Johnston, Sandy P. Schmukler, Stephen Romaine,
Viola Everett

> Whit Larsen, “Forever shining,”
Sentinel, February 23, 2026

This poem is joyful, hope-filled, and packed with truths about God, infinite Life. I’ll be sharing this poem with many friends! Thank you to Whit and the editors.

Susie Johnston, Yorktown, Virginia, US

This poem is beautiful! I’m keeping it handy to read again and again.

Sandy P. Schmukler, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US

> Bobby Lewis, “A spiritual workout,”
Sentinel, February 16, 2026

This is such a helpful testimony. Surely the joy of movement, spiritually understood, is one way we feel God’s presence.

Stephen Romaine, Tokyo, Japan

> Donna Toutjian Fletcher, “A Reader’s prayer,”
Sentinel, February 16, 2026

Referring to *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the writer of this article says with conviction, “I was confident it would tell me what I needed to know—and it did not disappoint!” This gave me an insight into how I should be reading *Science and Health*: with confidence that it will tell me just what I need to know. Thank you.

Viola Everett, Luther, Michigan, US

LIVING CHURCH

War in Iran: A Conversation with The Christian Science Monitor

Watch a replay of the March 2, 2026, online conversation with Scott Peterson, the *Monitor*’s senior war correspondent. Hosted by *Monitor* Editor Christa Case Bryant.

Scott discusses the future of Iran’s theocracy, what the current offensive means for the Iranian people and the Middle East as a whole, and how the United States, Israel, and Iran got to this point.

Having visited Iran more than 45 times, Scott brings deep expertise to these global developments. We hope this *Monitor* event, providing a perspective that gets above the fray, can serve as a jumping-off point for your prayers.

You can find the replay, along with other *Monitor* coverage of these developments, at csmonitor.com/iranwar.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL

PUBLISHED BY THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY

EDITOR: ETHEL A. BAKER

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PRINT & WEB PRODUCTION: GILLIAN A. LITCHFIELD, BRENDUNT SCOTT, MATTHEW MCLEOD-WARRICK

DESIGN: AARON CRANFORD

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BOSTON, MA 02115 USA

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SENTINEL DIGITAL TEXT EDITION

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

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