



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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- 2 **Do our prayers really make a difference to others?**
Larissa Snorek
- 3 **Christian, scientific prayer: A protest of Truth**
Deborah Peck
- 4 **Judgment**
- 5 **Responding to public issues with prayer**
Colin Treworgy
- 7 **Overcoming travel fears in my adopted country**
Name Withheld
- 8 **Weekly updates: January 19, 2026**
- 9 **If you're facing a moral dilemma**
Rachel Richardson
- 10 **Burns healed**
Martine Blackler
- 11 **Healed of thinking I had enemies**
Isaac Otieno
- 12 **Healing of swollen foot**
Diane Sheth
- 13 **Low tide on the island of Leros, Greece**
Photograph by Deborah Huelster Thompson McNeil
- 13 **Letters & Conversations**
Lilith Vespier, Ann Strenger Hodson, Barbara Knedlhans

Do our prayers really make a difference to others?

Larissa Snorek

This question sometimes comes when our heart goes out to someone struggling or we're moved by a difficult news story. Even when we take the demand to pray seriously, it can feel as though our individual prayers may be too small to really matter.

A study of Christian Science, though, shows that prayer isn't a fragile hope cast out into an immense darkness. Rather, it's a conscious realization of divine Truth, and this realization has power. Mary Baker Eddy defines prayer not as pleading with a distant God but as awakening to God's infinite goodness as already present, right in the midst of whatever seems difficult.

She writes, "Prayer can neither change God, nor bring His designs into mortal modes; but it can and does change our modes and our false sense of Life, Love, and Truth, uplifting us to Him" (*No and Yes*, p. 39). We don't pray, then, to get *God* to do something but to change *us*—to bring our human consciousness in line with the harmony that forever characterizes God's creation. This harmony is an already-established spiritual fact of God's creation as whole and good. Glimpsing this shifts our view, and, in turn, the light within our own thoughts brings healing to the world around us, even though it may not be immediately discernible.

We can tell when our thinking is yielding to the understanding of God's allness. Fear is quieted. Discouragement gives way to gratitude and courage. As thought is spiritualized, our experience changes, because evil cannot remain convincing in the light of the all-power of divine Truth and Love. We grow into "the spiritual understanding of prayer" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 10). This prayer, which Christian Science explains as scientific, recognizes the ceaseless operation of divine Principle, destroying sin, disease, and death.

When we pray from this standpoint, the effects are assured—we see the spiritual man's inseparability from God and the unreality of evil. Scientific

prayer gives us a solid basis for expecting healing. When we've experienced even one instance of God's goodness, we gain confidence that the same Principle operates universally. As matter-based thinking yields to spiritual understanding, thought is purified, and it cannot fail to receive an answer. As a New Testament writer assures us, "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (James 5:16, New Living Translation).

To pray effectively, however, we have to release a sense of personal responsibility. The impulse to try to "fix" things often clouds the stillness needed to perceive what God has already done. Prayer in Christian Science is not dependent on human effort but on spiritual Truth. Rather than praying harder, we find that the human mind needs to get quiet to be more receptive to the fact of God's power.

This prayer doesn't ignore the world's problems but enables us to view them correctly. Knowing that God is infinite Mind and Love, filling all space and governing all, we are able to view problems as untrue beliefs about spiritual reality, not actual things that need fixing. As this dawns on thought, these beliefs begin to dissolve. This isn't stressful—light doesn't struggle to dispel darkness; it just shines.

If it's tempting to wonder what difference one person's prayer can make for a larger, perhaps systemic problem, we can look deeper into the harmonious operation of divine Principle. Every healing that comes through reliance on God testifies to this operation. One instance of healing confirms the reliability of spiritual law—and the legitimacy of trusting prayer to reveal truth in every instance. Every time we see through the outward appearance of something to glimpse the true nature of life as spiritual—to see as God sees—it helps defeat whatever would obstruct spiritual progress in ourselves and for the world.

We see this in the life of Jesus. He moved through crowds with a pure, God-focused consciousness. Those needing healing were drawn to him because of the Christ that he fully manifested, and they were healed. Our prayer, like his, is not a personal effort but the activity of Christ—the influence of divine Love

expressing itself. Jesus prayed as one who knew that his prayer was heard, with calm confidence in God's goodness.

Jesus' example helps us see how our prayers make a difference. Take John:17. Jesus prays for himself, his immediate disciples, future believers, and the world, and the effects are evident. His prayers for himself resulted in his willingness to embrace the cross, knowing that it exemplified a moment of God's glory, not a defeat. The disciples were protected and strengthened. Despite persecution and imprisonment, all but one remained faithful and spread the Christ message. And Jesus' prayers for the future unified a new Christian community drawn from historically opposed Jews and Gentiles. "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one" (verse 21, NLT). This community is continuing evidence of divine Love in action.

So, yes—our prayers make a difference to others. They reveal what is spiritually true. In a world hungering for peace, compassion, and healing, each prayer contributes to the recognition of Love's all-power. This is not wishful thinking but the action of the Science of being. And nothing is more needed—or effective.

Larissa Snorek, Associate Editor

Christian, scientific prayer: A protest of Truth

Our prayers can move us from earnest entreaty to enlightened inspiration, and from spiritual protest to permanent healing.

Deborah Peck

I was in college when I first began having migraines. By the time I reached graduate school, they had become more frequent, and a year later, when I was a law student, migraines sometimes kept me from attending classes.

One day, while working with my study group, I felt the onset of a migraine. I asked my friends to help me, and they kindly arranged several desks in a darkened, empty classroom so I could lie down on them, using a coat as a pillow. But I was actually hoping to do more than just wait for relief. I had recently started reading the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, where I learned that I could pray for healing instead of relying on medication.

Though I was new to Christian Science, the concepts I had been studying had profoundly shifted my thinking. Doctors had explained that medication might help *manage* the migraines, but I had gleaned from *Science and Health* the hope, and then the understanding, that permanent healing was possible.

As a child, I had prayed often, and I had continued this practice as a young adult. Up to this point, my prayers had typically been humble, natural petitions asking God for help. Reading the Christian Science textbook, however, I discovered a different way to pray.

Science and Health describes Jesus' prayers as "deep and conscientious protests of Truth,—of man's likeness to God and of man's unity with Truth and Love" (p. 12). Later in the same book, the author also indicates that the Lord's Prayer, the prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples, illustrates the essence of Christian, scientific prayer—"the heaven-born aspiration and spiritual consciousness, . . . which instantaneously heals the sick" (p. 16).

The Lord's Prayer does not entreat God to heal the sick. It acknowledges God's supremacy and majesty, implicitly refuting anything unlike God. This is particularly clear in the last line of the prayer as given in the Gospel of Matthew: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" (6:13). Jesus healed the sick on the basis that his Father was forever present, omnipotent, and completely good.

In *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy illuminates each line of the Lord's Prayer with its spiritual sense. For instance, the textbook follows "Thy kingdom come" with "*Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present*" and "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" with "*Enable us to know,*

—as in heaven, so on earth,—God is omnipotent, supreme” (pp. 16–17).

Reflecting on the Lord’s Prayer and its spiritual interpretation, I asked myself, “If God is good, all-powerful, and ever present, then how can anything not good exist?” Logically, I knew that it couldn’t. I could protest against a migraine because sickness cannot exist in God’s universe. I moved past supplication to the acknowledgment of God’s divine nature: His goodness, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. Knowing that God, infinite Spirit, created man in His image and likeness and that His law of good is ever operative, I affirmed that I reflected God and that my true, spiritual selfhood was unmarred by sickness, pain, or sin.

Lying there on those hard desks, I reasoned about God and man in a fresh, inspired way. Guided by the Lord’s Prayer, its spiritual sense, and the desire to protest that sickness was not natural but *unnatural* to my true identity, my starting point was the all-harmonious and good God. I realized that a sovereign, wholly good God, whose laws govern all, could not allow pain or suffering and that I could not, therefore, experience anything but good.

As a law student, I appreciated the logic of case law and how it follows established judicial precedent. As I applied that to Christian Science, I recognized the precedent of divine omnipotence, which cannot be subverted, opposed, or nullified; the precedent of divine omnipresence, which rejects any reality apart from God and His goodness; and the precedent of divine omniscience, which establishes God as having a universal knowledge of Truth, where error cannot exist.

I reasoned that the precedence of this universal God, good, identified in the Bible as infinite Truth and Love, ruled out discord. I could experience only peace because I am God’s likeness, governed by His law. I am perfect because I was created by a perfect God and am therefore untouched by fear, pain, or sickness. My protest that I was not sick became a powerful affirmation of my real selfhood: that I was spiritual, created in God’s

likeness, and forever reflected the perfection, beauty, and completeness of God, Spirit.

As I prayed, the pain dissipated until I could finally sit up. Shortly thereafter, one of my study group friends came to check on me. She found me sitting on a chair with the lights on, free of pain and pondering with gratitude what had transpired. Understanding the basis of Christianly scientific prayer—the perfection of God, and man’s inviolable spiritual heritage as His likeness—had healed me. And I have remained free of migraines for over four decades.

The foundation of Christian Science healing is the unchanging truth of God and man. In *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy succinctly writes, “The Christlike understanding of scientific being and divine healing includes a perfect Principle and idea,—perfect God and perfect man,—as the basis of thought and demonstration” (p. 259). Objecting to sickness, knowing that we are armed with the spiritual ideal of God and man’s perfection, is not unrealistic but, as I learned, a practical and healing approach.

We all have the right to oppose sickness by being truth’s advocate. Our prayers can move us from earnest entreaty to enlightened inspiration, and from spiritual protest to permanent healing, by affirming God’s power and presence and our flawless identity as His reflection.

Judgment

In early Scripture, the concept of judgment is closely tied to justice. What is just and right in human affairs is based on the nature of God as Judge over all His creation. Deuteronomy 32:4 has, “All his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Where pagan deities are viewed as fickle and unpredictable, God is known to be unvarying and reliable in His righteous judgment.

Israelites strove to pattern their behavior after the divine model. The prophet Micah counseled, “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8). Yet Hebrew history included multiple lapses from faithfulness to God, and God was believed to bring punishment in retribution for these failings.

With the advent of Christ Jesus, judgment was defined as the ability to see beyond outward appearances to discern spiritual reality. Jesus charged, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Those who commit to this practice experience the justice of divine law and are released from condemnation (see Romans 8:1).

Applying Jesus’ words to contemporary thought, Mary Baker Eddy writes: “No evidence before the material senses can close my eyes to the scientific proof that God, good, is supreme. Though clouds are round about Him, the divine justice and judgment are enthroned” (Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 277).

For more on this topic, see “Divine justice and judgment” by Violet Ker Seymer.

Responding to public issues with prayer

I don’t have to be an expert on what human actions should be taken, because my prayer consists of listening to what the divine Mind, God, is communicating to me.

Colin Treworgy

I was in an aisle seat on a cross-country flight. A flight attendant stopped next to me and, speaking to a man sitting in the seat behind me, said, “Sir, we need your help with a medical emergency.” The man, whom the

crew apparently knew to be a medical doctor, got up and went forward in the cabin with the attendant.

Although my help had not been requested, I found that I couldn’t simply go back to reading. I put aside my book and contemplated how it would be appropriate for me to pray about the situation. I hadn’t been asked to pray specifically for the person in need, nor did I know who needed help or what the problem was, but that didn’t mean that my prayer couldn’t be helpful.

Prayer in Christian Science isn’t about influencing another human mind or changing a material body. It is about refuting the false report of the physical senses, listening to spiritual sense—to the thoughts that divine Mind, God, is communicating—and being thoroughly persuaded in our own consciousness concerning what is true. In her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy writes, “. . . be thoroughly persuaded in your own mind concerning the truth which you think or speak, and you will be the victor” (p. 412).

So I did what I could. I asked myself, “What in my thoughts at this moment needs to be corrected?” As I quietly listened, two thoughts that needed to be challenged stood out: that we were far away from help and that life was threatened.

I corrected the first by acknowledging to myself that, regardless of where we were humanly (even in a plane high up in the sky!), we were not outside of God’s kingdom or separated from God, good, because God is ever present and all-powerful. Because of this, we always have the spiritual resources needed to meet any human circumstance. The Lord’s Prayer that Christ Jesus (see Matthew 6:9–13), gave us says of God, the “Our Father” of all, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” And the spiritual sense of this verse, as given in *Science and Health*, is, “*Enable us to know, —as in heaven, so on earth,—God is omnipotent, supreme*” (p. 17).

I corrected the second thought, that life was threatened, by reminding myself that God is Life—that nothing could threaten God, and therefore nothing could

threaten man (the true, spiritual identity of each of us) as the entirely spiritual expression of Life.

I continued contemplating these ideas until I felt thoroughly persuaded of their immediate and constant truth. A great calm came over me, and I felt that I had done what I needed to do.

In the meantime, the plane made an emergency landing, and medics came on board and began talking with people who were sitting about nine rows in front of me. After a few minutes, I watched the medics and the doctor leave the plane, accompanied by a woman walking on her own. After several more minutes, the doctor reboarded the plane alone, and we resumed our flight.

The doctor was traveling with his wife and two children. When he returned to his seat behind me, one of the children asked, “Daddy, what happened?” He replied, “A woman wasn’t feeling well, but she’ll be all right.”

The flight attendant came to get information for a report about the incident. The doctor told him that he wasn’t sure what the problem had been. When he had first reached the woman, she was unconscious and had no pulse. “I thought she was gone,” he said. “Then, it was like someone flipped a switch.” He went on to explain that she had regained consciousness, and all her vital signs had quickly returned to normal. She was so well that he felt bad that she had been asked to leave the plane in order to get checked out, but as a precaution, she had agreed to do so.

Some time after this incident, I found myself wondering if my prayers had had a healing influence on the situation, or if things would have turned out the same without them. I realized, though, that each of these thoughts was a “red herring” that would either belittle prayer or tempt me to acknowledge as reality something that was spiritually untrue—that there really had been a threat to life in the first place.

I knew that both thoughts were based on false assumptions. Prayer is significant and powerful, but not because it can “fight back” against a supposedly real power called evil that shares space and government with God. Prayer reveals the truth of being, which

dispels the belief in any power other than God, good, and brings healing. The truth that life wasn’t threatened on that plane was always true, and the result of my prayer was that I felt and saw that clearly. Even if I hadn’t been on the plane, truth would still have been true. Whether or not others would have seen evidence of the truth cannot be known, but this doesn’t diminish the significance of my bearing witness to truth, nor does it give any reality to the lie that life is in and of matter or that man can be separated from God, Life.

This incident has become a model for me of how to respond to public issues with prayer. When I hear or read about domestic or international conflict, political disputes, or tragic events, or when dire predictions are made about economic or social issues, I ask myself, “What is coming to my thought to be corrected?” I then apply the truth to these concerns. I continue pondering and acknowledging these truths until I am “thoroughly persuaded” in my own mind.

When I’m doing this kind of work, I don’t need to pray for anyone specifically or be impressed by how many people seem to be involved, because in every case, I am treating only my own thought. I don’t have to be concerned about how large, distant, or complex the problem seems to be, because I am not trying to manipulate a real situation. I don’t have to know the details of what is happening, or even be an expert on what human actions should be taken, because my prayer consists of listening to what the divine Mind, God, is communicating to me. What I am doing is dispelling in my own thought the illusion of a power or mind apart from God and replacing that illusion with a firm conviction of the truth. My goal is to become thoroughly persuaded in my own mind of the truth that God, good, is the only power and government.

This prayer may take only a few moments, or it may be repeated over days and weeks. If I find this process tiring, I know that I have strayed off track—that I am exercising the human mind instead of listening to what divine Mind is communicating. I know that my prayer is done when I feel a lasting peace.

When we pray in this way about public events or issues, we are fulfilling the divine proclamation “Ye are my

witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isaiah 43:10). This witnessing is all that we’re called on to do. God is handling the rest!

Overcoming travel fears in my adopted country

God is All; therefore, wherever we might be, we are always safe because we can never be anywhere where God, good, is absent.

Name Withheld

I wasn’t born or raised in the United States, but in the early 2000s, I had the privilege of studying here as a college student, and I’ve been living and working in the US ever since. I came to love this country and have always felt embraced by its people. Several years ago, I applied for US citizenship and became a naturalized citizen.

Though I have always lived lawfully in the US, recent news reports had me feeling increasingly unsettled, even unsafe. I found myself being afraid to travel, even domestically within the US.

Several months ago, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting just outside Washington, DC, the home of our nation’s capital. The day before my trip, a friend alerted me to a major political event that had been organized to take place in the capital that same weekend and to protests planned nationwide on the same day. When I went online and began to read news about the event, I became fearful that I might inadvertently be caught in large protesting crowds. I would also have to fly into DC for my meeting and go through security checkpoints at more than one airport. Though I am legally a citizen, I feared that my immigration status might be questioned.

That night, I prayed about what to do. Should I go or cancel the trip? My thoughts quieted somewhat, and I fell asleep. In the middle of the night, however, I suddenly woke up with this thought: “Why do I need to go to the epicenter of conflict?”

Then and there, I mentally knelt in prayer, asking God to give me one healing idea that would bring me peace. What immediately came to mind was this assurance from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: “God is at once the centre and circumference of being” (pp. 203–204). This reminded me that God is All; therefore, wherever we might be, we are always safe because we can never be anywhere where God, good, is absent.

I pondered the word *epicenter* from that question that had come to me. *Epicenter* is generally used in reference to the point of an earthquake from which ripples out the instability and destruction, generating fear. I looked up the definition of *epicenter* and found *capital*, *center*, and *hub* listed as synonyms (merriam-webster.com). I realized that I was associating our nation’s capital, the very center of this country’s government, with a place from which fear, unrest, and injustice could ripple out.

In my prayers, I reasoned that God is the only governing Principle, and from God, infinite Love, the epicenter of all that is real, only good can radiate; no evil or injustice can emanate from the omnipotent and omnipresent source of all good. The only controlling power of the universe is God, divine Principle. And, as I recognized that this Principle is All-in-all, I began to see that all that is taking place in the true, spiritual center and circumference of being—in the allness of God, Spirit—reflects the reign of His government, which is expressed only in qualities such as justice, mercy, integrity, and compassion.

Under this divine governance, nobody’s experience or livelihood is subject to, or can be disturbed by, the suggestion of any other governing power. If our life has suddenly been disrupted, perhaps because of an injustice, we can remember that “in [God] we live, and move, and have our being,” as we read in the Bible (Acts 17:28). We can know and trust that wherever we live or go, we are always living and moving in the infinitude of

divine Love, where no one is ever misplaced, displaced, lost, or forgotten. God knows where each one of His children is and is keeping each of us safe and meeting our every need.

As our thoughts are illuminated by these and other spiritual truths, our fears begin to diminish. We see the infinite possibilities and opportunities open to us wherever we are. In reality, all that we can experience individually and collectively is God's goodness. In my case, I felt more at peace; the sense of being limited and paralyzed by fear lessened, and I decided to pursue my trip.

As I approached the security checkpoints at different airports, I leaned on this verse from the Bible: "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace" (Isaiah 55:12). Knowing that I could experience only joy and peace gave me strength and confidence. And my trip was entirely harmonious. I was met with kindness by everyone I interacted with throughout my journey. What was most significant to me, however, was overcoming the fear that had almost taken my freedom and stopped me from traveling. In fact, a few weeks later, I took another domestic trip without any fear.

This experience made me think of the story in the Gospel of Matthew about Peter walking on the water (see 14:22–32). Peter, too, had momentarily lost sight of God's allness and power. When Peter saw Jesus walking on the sea toward the disciples' boat, he went out to meet him but became distracted by fear. Overwhelmed by the winds and waves, he began to sink. But Jesus immediately put out his hand and caught him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And when they got to the ship, "the wind ceased."

I am thankful to know from my study of Christian Science that whenever we have Peter-like experiences and feel ourselves being sunk by fear, we can rely on the saving power and outstretched hand of Christ to lift us from the agitated waters and contrary winds of fear. Christ, Truth, protects us, comforts us, and guides us to the safe shores of spiritual understanding, on which we

are always protected and at peace, and where we find the kingdom of heaven, our permanent home.

Weekly updates: January 19, 2026

The Christian Science Journal and Christian Science Sentinel —more responsive

Issues of the *Sentinel* and *Journal* are now curated and published significantly closer to their issue cover date, so as to include the most timely and relevant content possible. Plus, the new online formatting makes content easier to find. These changes are designed to support your daily practice of Christian Science and to strengthen your connection to Church.

As the Trustees of The Christian Science Publishing Society noted in their letter titled "Keeping our periodicals timely and relevant," Mary Baker Eddy's divinely inspired By-Laws give clear direction about the Church periodicals, including this: "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" (*Manual of The Mother Church*, p. 44).

The "organs of this Church" continue to address the needs of today with relevant, timely, healing content, and the changes to curation, publishing, and online formatting facilitate meeting this ongoing goal.

Curious as to what all of this means? Here's a full list of new content and features:

New to both the *Sentinel* and *Journal*:

- A changed cadence for our issue announcement emails means readers are now alerted as soon

as the latest *Sentinel* or *Journal* issue is available online. These emails also offer the latest Church news. (Sign up for *Sentinel* issue announcements at sentinel.christianscience.com/email-signup.)

- “Living Church” highlights inspiration and information from The Mother Church and its branches worldwide.
- Print readers can immediately go online to read and share content from the latest print issue. Previously, print issues arrived well in advance of their online publication.

New to the *Sentinel*:

- A redesigned home page helps readers more easily find content that appeals to them.
- An online-only section, “From the Editors,” shares a weekly message and highlights three pieces from each issue.
- Sections such as “Daily Practice,” “Praying for the World,” “Back to Basics,” and “Spiritual Journeys” organize issue content by metaphysical themes, so you can more easily find what interests you.
- “Loving the Scriptures” encourages love for and engagement with the Bible.

New to the *Journal*:

- An online issue page now has clearer formatting to highlight new and existing sections.
- “The Bible: Our Sufficient Guide” shares the blessings that come from the deep spiritual understanding of the Bible unlocked by our textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy.

New to JSH-Online.com:

- An online hub titled “Bible Resources” highlights offerings for studying the Bible—all in one place.
- Curated, digital collections under the heading of “Exploring the Bible” facilitate deep engagement with the Scriptures and focus on the spiritual inspiration that comes from studying the Bible. Dive into the first three to learn more about Abraham, Jerusalem, and baptism.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

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 feature keeps the Full-Text and In-Context views at hand, supporting deeper study and understanding.

If you’re facing a moral dilemma

Rachel Richardson

It was a question I wasn’t expecting. A female choreographer for a dance piece I was in asked the women in the group if we would be OK performing topless.

She requested that we think it over and then come to her with our thoughts. While my initial reaction was to feel conflicted, I could tell that the other women were excited about it, which made me hesitant to speak up. I didn’t want to ruin the choreographer’s vision or spoil the experience for my friends.

During my time as a dancer, I have become very comfortable changing in front of colleagues and dancing in tight costumes, so technically I wasn’t uncomfortable with the concept of dancing topless. But it still didn’t feel like something I wanted to do. I knew it would take courage to speak up for myself, but I didn’t want to avoid doing so based on fear of being different or not being accepted. I wanted to speak up for myself based on whatever decision really felt right for me.

Initially, I couldn’t see any reason why performing topless would be wrong. It was possible that it would make others uncomfortable, but that is true of so much art. There would be a warning in the playbill and online so people could just not come if it was something they didn’t want to see. It was also scheduled to be a fairly small performance for a select group.

At the time, I was also taking an academic class where we were studying ethics and morals. I had been trying to better understand morality as a practical support to individuals and society—as something that improves our lives rather than something that is restrictive or inconsistent.

I knew that many concepts of morality have evolved from religion and seem to have their basis in beliefs about heaven and hell—or about God keeping a tally of what individuals do right or wrong and rewarding or punishing them accordingly. As a student of Christian Science, my understanding of God as divine Love especially didn't fit with that last notion.

Also, the concept of inconsistent rules that were detrimental to certain individuals or groups didn't work with my understanding of God as Principle, who orchestrates and governs life in a harmonious way that gives everything purpose. Like the laws of mathematics, nothing in God's universe is random or arbitrary. Principle expresses itself in consistency, harmony, and universal goodness.

It seemed clear that a good starting place would be to better understand my own spirituality and share that understanding with others. I knew that my spiritual identity was rooted in God, who is all good, which means I already express all the qualities that I want to contribute to society. It felt like dancing topless would put an extra focus on my physicality that didn't feel necessary or helpful. Instead, thinking of my true substance as spiritual gives me an unchanging sense of stability and worth, which feels very different than basing my worth on how I or others view my physicality.

I was happy to be able to tell the choreographer that I wasn't interested in dancing topless, because it felt empowering to be clear about where I stood and not have fear as part of my decision-making.

When I shared my thoughts with the choreographer, she was kind and understanding and ultimately decided to go forward without the nudity. After the performance, multiple friends in the audience and my fellow dancers all commented that they were grateful that the piece had not been topless. They felt that the

overall message of the piece was delivered much more clearly without that as a distraction.

This was an important moment for me, as it gave me practice in speaking up for myself without fear and in relying on prayer to know what was really right to do. I was grateful to see that Christian Science offers clear solutions to moral dilemmas and that the result was collectively acknowledged as a good outcome.

Burns healed

Martine Blackler

Several months ago, while working in the kitchen, I mishandled the kettle, and steam burned the whole inside of my arm, blistering it badly.

The pain was severe. My thoughts immediately began replaying what had happened, and I was tempted to view the pain as punishment for my carelessness and the inevitable result of this type of accident.

Knowing, however, that this mental state was not a path to healing, I earnestly endeavored to instead listen for God's voice and be receptive to Christ, God's true idea, which destroys the belief that anything unlike God, good, can be real. Only the Christ would speak the truth about my situation and enable me to affirm my true, spiritual perfection and identity as God's creation, which were untouched by material circumstances.

The spiritual interpretation of the Lord's Prayer in the Christian Science textbook includes the petition, "*Enable us to know,—as in heaven, so on earth,—God is omnipotent, supreme*" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 17). This was my need and my prayer—to feel only God's omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.

Soon, a sense of God's allness and love illuminated my thought, and I no longer felt that I was in a wilderness of pain, doubt, and fear. I instead recognized my true

identity as God's image and likeness, completely free and well.

The pain disappeared, and within a day, there was no trace of a burn—no blistering or redness.

Martine Blackler

Uvongo, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Healed of thinking I had enemies

Isaac Otieno

I'm grateful for the lesson I've learned that the ability to love our enemies must begin with an inward transformation. In other words, if we think someone is difficult to love, it is our thinking about them that needs healing.

For many years, I felt that I had critics or enemies among my siblings, workmates, and neighbors. However, as I matured in my understanding of Christian Science, I realized that the problem wasn't them, but something I needed to correct in my own thought.

That's not to say that others had never done anything wrong, but I found helpful insight in these words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (5:43-45).

This helped me better understand that God is Love, so He protects His children. And as His children, who reflect divine Love, we cannot be vulnerable to discord or have bad relationships with one another. I increasingly discerned that each of us is one with God, just as a drop of water in the ocean is one with the

ocean. This understanding enabled me to regard the term *enemy*

as describing not a person or people but the thoughts that would separate us, such as fear, self-condemnation, and so on.

In her essay "Love Your Enemies," Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, explains that the belief that we have enemies is false. She writes, "Simply count your enemy to be that which defiles, defaces, and dethrones the Christ-image that you should reflect" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 8). She adds further on, "'Love thine enemies' is identical with 'Thou hast no enemies'" (p. 9).

In my prayer, I started focusing on expressing the Christ-image—the true idea of God that Christ Jesus demonstrated—and on connecting the concept of loving our enemies with the understanding that we have no enemies. This understanding that "thou hast no enemies" became a blessing in my life, as it enabled me to forgive and to show love and kindness to those whom I had previously regarded as enemies. I could now greet them freely and lovingly—and I noticed them expressing more kindness toward me. I realized that forgiveness was not for them but for me. Forgiving and loving our enemies frees us mentally, and it is an important part of our spiritual development.

When we consider Jesus' life and character, we find that he demonstrated so much love for those who opposed him and his teachings and healing work. This gave him the ability to say, even when he was on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

The realization that we are all beloved children of God and the expression of divine Love enables us to forgive and to pray for those who seem to be against us. The reality is that when we feel and display this type of love to others, we are showing them the nature of God. And to me, this is what it means to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14).

I'm always thankful for the gift of Christian Science in my life. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

Healing of swollen foot

Diane Sheth

Last summer, I had a wonderful healing of a sore, swollen foot that also did not flex easily or sometimes at all. The only footwear I could stand was sandals or backless shoes. For several weeks, the foot was uncomfortable, and standing was difficult even for normal periods of time. But I was able to pray, and it was the fact that this condition was healed solely through prayer that means the most to me and has left the biggest impression.

I've had many healings through the application of the teachings of Christian Science, so I expected healing in this case as well. I prayed with several statements of truth from the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, such as "the scientific statement of being" (p. 468), which begins: "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all." I also pondered this: "Have no fear that matter can ache, swell, and be inflamed as the result of a law of any kind, when it is self-evident that matter can have no pain nor inflammation" (p. 393).

Early one week, an invitation came that ended up hastening the healing. My daughter asked me to attend a state fair with her that coming weekend, which would require a lot of walking, certainly more than I was doing at the moment. She knew of my mobility problem, but we decided to see how things were at week's end.

The day of the fair was hot and humid. Although my foot was still swollen, I went, not wanting to disappoint my daughter. I was buoyed by my prayers and fully expectant of good. My daughter's motive—hoping we could create a special memory during this time together

—was so pure and loving. I knew that her love for me, and mine for her, had its source in God, Love, and that it was this infinite Love that was motivating and supporting both of us.

We arrived at the fair as the gates opened, but there were already hundreds of others present. The parking attendant directed us to an area far from the entrance. My heart started to sink. I turned my thoughts to God and immediately heard, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). This greatly comforted me, and I felt peaceful. As we parked, we saw a man in a golf cart transporting people from the parking lot to the nearest fairgrounds entrance. We were given a ride, for which we were very grateful.

As we began to walk around the fairgrounds, my thought lifted. I was deeply grateful for my daughter's thoughtfulness and patience. We enjoyed the beautiful flowers and the happy activity around us, and I knew that I was feeling and experiencing divine Love's presence.

Within an hour, all concern about and awareness of the condition of my foot left me, and I was walking normally and without pain. At one point, my daughter even told me to walk slower! Previous concerns had been replaced by what I can only describe as a deep love for my daughter and appreciation for her desire to have a lighthearted, fun, and memorable experience with her mom.

Back home that evening, as I prayed and thought about the day's events, I had a clear insight from God into how this healing occurred. It had had nothing to do with exercise, weather, location, or other material conditions; rather, it was the effect of divine Love reflected in the pure motive of a right desire. My full recognition of and gratitude for that loving motive had healed me. Not only was I able to walk again without difficulty, but the swelling fully subsided, and I was able to return to wearing regular shoes. The foot was—and is—perfect!

Mrs. Eddy writes: "More love is the great need of mankind. A pure affection, concentric, forgetting self, forgiving wrongs and forestalling them, should swell

the lyre of human love" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 107).

I remain humbly grateful to God for this healing.

Diane Sheth

Pewaukee, Wisconsin, US

Low tide on the island of Leros, Greece

Photograph by Deborah Huelster Thompson McNeil

Thus Truth engrounds

me on the rock,

Upon Life's shore,

'Gainst which the winds and

waves can shock,

Oh, nevermore!

—**Mary Baker Eddy,**

Poems, p. 12

Letters & Conversations

Lilith Vespier, Ann Strenger Hodson, Barbara Knedlhans

> **The Editors, “New Bible initiatives,”** *Sentinel*, November 17, 2025

Thank you for the continuous efforts to explore options, reexamine existing formats/policies and make changes appropriate for the time and reflective of Christian Science and its Discoverer. I greatly appreciate you and your work.

Lilith Vespier, *Wenatchee, Washington, US*

> **Douglas Paul, “Whose hand is on the spigot?”** *Sentinel*, November 10, 2025

This is such an important article. I found it waiting for me on JSH-Online.com as I came away from agonizing over frightening developments in various countries. Earlier today, I had prayed for a better understanding of how to stay close to God, Love—how to pray aright in the midst of seemingly dreadful political situations. Now I have my answer. It felt like a perfect and immediate response to prayer. I am so grateful. Thank you!

Ann Strenger Hodson, *London, England*

> **Tony Lobl, “Are we doubting ourselves, or God?”** *Sentinel*, November 10, 2025

What an uplifting editorial.

Barbara Knedlhans, *Queanbeyan, New South Wales, Australia*

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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL, SUBMISSIONS,
210 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. P03-10
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: SENTINEL@CSPS.COM

CONTACT US

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