



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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How not to burn with anger

Mark Swinney

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In our world today, one of the strongest displays of power is being calm. It's all too easy to get fired up the moment we hear of something ugly and offensive. Choosing instead the peace and serenity that are based on knowing God's presence at that moment has a healing effect.

Whether in the form of a slow burn or a quick, blazing flash, anger noticeably slows progress and reconciliation. Gritting your teeth and counting to ten is better than nothing, but it is unlikely to establish the genuine peace that is so needed. Much better, and much more empowering, is anchoring our thoughts in an acknowledgment of God's active authority and goodness.

The quality of our thoughts always matters. My father taught me as a boy how to make a campfire. After we made a small fireplace out of rocks, what we needed next was some very dry tinder and small pieces of kindling. We used fallen leaves, curls of birchbark, and dry grass to light some thin sticks. Once burning, the fire would engulf larger pieces of wood until the flames were really dancing.

As we go through our day, might our thoughts sometimes be like that very dry grass, ready to flame up quickly as soon as we come into contact with even the smallest spark of offense? Or can our quality of thought be compared to the fireplace rocks that remain unconsumed while keeping the flames from spreading?

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth," says the Bible (Proverbs 26:20). Yes, when we embark upon each day, not carrying with us the "wood" that represents flammable sensitivity, but instead letting our thoughts come from the encircling Rock that is God, we feel divine authority and maturity. In her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy, the

Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, defines *rock* metaphysically, in part, as "spiritual foundation; Truth" (p. 593).

The more we practice it, the more natural it becomes to stand on the Rock of Truth and speak and act in ways that help and heal.

It is encouraging—and heartening—to note how Christ Jesus stood mentally on the Rock, the spiritual foundation, that is God, divine Truth, when a powerful Roman governor (Pontius Pilate) who was serving under the rule of Emperor Tiberius threatened Jesus unjustly with death. You can feel Jesus' steadfast allegiance to Truth in his calm response: "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). And just a few days later, this was proven true by Jesus' resurrection.

Following Jesus' example, we can adopt an allegiance to the same spiritual foundation by nurturing and growing in our understanding of the allness of God. Then we will be prepared, no matter how temptations may come, not to get inflamed by impositions, insults, and offenses that speak to the opposite belief in some other presence or power. We can recognize that it's God's nature that deserves and demands our attention, not the world's fiery anger.

The Bible says of God, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Note how there is no dry, flammable kindling of commotion in us whenever thought is feeling the peace of being fixed on what God is and does.

Importantly, there's no need to be discouraged if we do find ourselves inflamed about something. Right then and there, we can resolve to renew and strengthen our efforts. Each hour of the day is a fresh starting line, and the more we practice it, the more natural it becomes to rise up from anger, stand calmly on the Rock of Truth, and speak and act in ways that help and heal.

This is more than a human discipline of thought. It is a response to the grace of Christ, Truth. As a result, we see that God is in control of His spiritual creation, which is the only reality. It is a joy to receive and respond to the Christ rather than be carried away by

the blinding intensity and resentment that come from seeing things the way the world sees them. Mrs. Eddy counsels, “Throughout all generations both before and after the Christian era, the Christ, as the spiritual idea, —the reflection of God,—has come with some measure of power and grace to all prepared to receive Christ, Truth” (*Science and Health*, p. 333).

Although humanity’s salvation may appear to come in fits and starts, God’s healing influence always penetrates and gets through callous self-righteousness and indifference. Waiting for humankind to come up with needed solutions independent of God can bring volatile impatience. But injustice has no divine support, and calm trust in divinely impelled progress is prayer that ultimately moves things along more smoothly. Along with David, we can declare, “Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation” (Psalms 62:1).

Every time you choose in prayer to feel the powerful calm of God’s presence, goodness, and affection rather than becoming lit up by the fires of worldly thought, you are doing something wonderful. You are glorifying God and contributing to human progress in the most powerful way.

Mark Swinney, Guest Editorial Writer

Living in God’s sustaining love, never in limbo

Nothing can strip us of our spiritual birthright, the irrevocable identity and citizenship we all have in common.

Abigail Mathieson Warrick

Much in our lives is dictated by our birthplace and citizenship. In today’s world, these factors determine what rights we can exercise, including where we can live. But when institutions or outside circumstances

compromise or fail to recognize and uphold our rights, it would seem that they can put our lives in limbo.

Do we then have any recourse for stability and happiness—for the right and ability to claim and regain our individual freedoms?

Christian Science teaches that we do. The study of this Science raises thought to a higher, more spiritual, basis, from which we perceive that our real identity includes inherent freedoms and individual rights that come from God, divine Spirit. When we understand that they have their origin in Spirit, are supported by spiritual law, and are therefore indefeasible, we are able to exercise our innate spiritual dominion in order to claim those God-given rights.

By the time I was seven, my family had moved country five times.

I learned this some time ago. When I turned twenty-one, a consular oversight deprived me of my naturalized citizenship and left me stateless for seven years. The situation was compounded by the fact that I had lived in many different countries. In fact, I was just three months old when I crossed the Indian Ocean and left my birth country permanently, and by the time I was seven, my family had moved country five times. While the loss of citizenship threatened my sense of independence, stability, security, opportunity, and identity, it also led me to think more deeply about what provides these essentials and gives them permanence in our lives.

Christ Jesus is the Exemplar for Christians, so he was a natural inspiration to me. He never doubted his spiritual identity and divine origin for a moment. He encouraged all of his followers to acknowledge God, good, as their ever-present Father and guide, as the supreme authority, and as having jurisdiction over all. When the world treated Jesus like an impostor rather than the prophesied Messiah, his allegiance to his healing mission remained firm because he knew that he was God’s Son, sent by Him to be the Savior of the world.

As he preached the gospel, Jesus often traveled long distances on foot from city to city, relying on the

hospitality of his followers for a place in which to rest. While he didn't have a permanent physical address that we know of, he knew that he lived in the harmony of divine Spirit, the one God. As Scripture says of God, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

The effect of Jesus' matchless spiritual understanding was that right here on earth, he felt the spiritual peace and safety of this divine haven. His wonderful healings rested on the knowledge that every one of God's children lives in the harmony of Spirit, is validated by God, and possesses the inalienable freedoms and rights inherent to all as God's offspring.

As I prayed to see this for myself, I found a beautiful promise for humanity in these words from the Christian Science textbook: "One infinite God, good, unifies men and nations; constitutes the brotherhood of man; ends wars; fulfils the Scripture, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself;' annihilates pagan and Christian idolatry,—whatever is wrong in social, civil, criminal, political, and religious codes; equalizes the sexes; annuls the curse on man, and leaves nothing that can sin, suffer, be punished or destroyed" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 340). After repeated fruitless efforts over the previous seven years to right the wrong of being left stateless, my prayers enabled me to overcome a creeping sense of despair.

We are not isolated or solitary mortals and are never in limbo or left to fend helplessly for ourselves.

Confident that the one God has supreme authority and would right the wrong, I was inspired to approach the diplomatic authorities in the country where I was living. This led them to uncover an administrative error, and my citizenship was immediately restored.

I later received an official apology and offer of financial compensation from the government, noting that my case was unprecedented. But I declined this offer because I did not wish to accept that a human institution could truly control my life and its movement. I felt quite tangibly that God alone guided and governed me and that the years of statelessness, including time in an airport detention facility and the threat of deportation, had, most importantly, been years of spiritual activity, growth, and a deepening understanding of my true

heritage as a child of God. Although lawfully following the requirements of immigration policies, I had seen more clearly that my identity is not defined or limited by a state bureaucracy or a personal history and that my God-given mission in life could not be thwarted.

The Bible offers examples of how this wonderful spiritual fact applies to all people. For instance, the prophet Elijah faced many threats to his mission. At one time, feeling utterly alone and defeated, he sat down under a tree in despair, asking God to take away his life (see I Kings 19). Inspired by God to go to Mount Horeb, he was confronted by a furious wind, an earthquake, and a fire. After these turbulent events, the Bible states that God was not in the earthquake, the wind, or the fire. Much like the tale "told by an idiot" described in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, they were "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

It was then that Elijah heard "a still small voice"—the gentle, clear, steady Word of God, encouraging and strengthening him spiritually. He perceived that God, divine Spirit, was in control, the only governing power, and that his mission could not fail. Reinvigorated, Elijah went on to prove this indisputably.

The Bible, a gold mine of inspiring stories and truths, reiterates how all-encompassing and invincible God's love is for His precious creation. It tells us that we are so much more than the physical senses recognize. Our selfhood, being wholly spiritual, belongs indivisibly and indissolubly to God. We are not isolated or solitary mortals and are never in limbo or left to fend helplessly for ourselves. The fact that we belong to God and live in eternity, in the stability, security, and prosperity of His kingdom, rests on fixed law, or divine Principle—on the unassailable truth that an idea of God cannot be severed from the Mind that conceives it and alone gives each of us our identity.

We feel, and are, secure when we stand with this spiritual reality. As we turn wholeheartedly to Spirit, we see that nothing can strip us of our spiritual birthright, the irrevocable identity and citizenship we all have in common—in other words, that which God has given us. We are all the divinely approved

beneficiaries of the goodness of God, who defines and defends our unassailable worth and purpose.

For more on this topic, see “The listening heart” by Viola P. Soneson.

Samuel: Priest, judge, prophet

In the period following the leadership of Moses and Joshua, ancient Israel was ruled by judges and guided by prophets. Foremost among these early luminaries was Samuel. His birth had come about in answer to his mother’s prayer, and she had honored her promise to devote him to God’s service. When he was a small boy serving in the Temple under the priest Eli, he heard four audible divine calls that sealed his future ministry (see First Samuel, chapters 1 and 3).

Samuel became the successor to Eli as well as the last of the Hebrew judges and first of the great prophets—and he led Israel from a loosely organized tribal system to a centralized monarchy. When the people requested a king to govern them, God charged Samuel to choose Saul (see I Samuel 8:4, 5, 22; 9:15–17). And when Saul disobeyed God, Samuel followed God’s direction to anoint David as future king (see 15:1–9; 16:1–13).

Many centuries later, future spiritual pioneer Mary Baker Eddy—then about eight years of age—received a divine calling similar to Samuel’s (see Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, pp. 8–9). Mary’s mother counseled her to reply as young Samuel had: “Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.” As an adult, Mrs. Eddy wrote: “To-day, if ye would hear His voice, listen to His Word and serve no other gods. Then the divine Principle of good, that we call God, will be found an ever-present help in all things . . .” (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 152).

Finding my spiritual direction

Paul Ngugi

The first time I heard about Christian Science, I was at a technical institute, studying mechanics. There, we interacted with people of different religions, and one day, a friend gave me an issue of the *Sentinel*. At first, I wasn’t interested, but I took it and read it during my free time. I was seeking direction and looking into different religions, and the *Sentinel* articles described an infinite Love that we can all feel as we understand more about a supreme, all-loving God.

As a result of the many challenges in my life, it was easy to come to other conclusions—even losing hope and a sense of there being any purpose in living. But the articles and testimonies in the *Sentinel* told me of a spiritual universe where peace and love are infinite and unconditional. I remember reading the verse “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11). This actually gave me an expectation that I could face my difficulties.

I searched for and found a branch Church of Christ, Scientist, where I could visit and pick up more magazines to read. There, I found *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, which gives a full elaboration of Christian Science. I came to a point where I felt I could, as her words said, “emerge gently from matter into Spirit” (p. 485).

Through discovering my true identity as spiritual—as the creation of God, Spirit—I saw my daily life, which before was bound by limitation, unfolding freely as I relied on one God, good, in everything I did. Prayer transformed how I understood my identity, and I saw

that I was whole, made in God's image and likeness, as the first chapter of the Bible tells us.

One instance of trusting God in my daily activities occurred last year. After a safe flight following my Christian Science students association meeting, I found that my phone battery had died, and I couldn't contact a taxi driver. I was stranded. I prayed the Lord's Prayer and affirmed the truth of my spiritual identity. Then, from a few steps away, a man approached me and said, "I know you want a ride, and God has sent me to you." He got me a taxi driver on his phone and then said, "Don't worry—pay any amount you've got." Whoa, amazing! This, to me, was a truly divinely led connection.

At work the next day, I fell 12 feet from a ladder and hit the concrete floor. Alone and in pain, I prayed to know that I am the infinite image of God and am held up by divine Love's full support. In a few minutes, I got up from the floor, totally fine. I realized I had been healed.

Since that time, I have had many healings through the study and practice of Christian Science, and accounts of some have been published in this magazine. I thank God, for I have been transformed, and I know that that is happening for students of Christian Science around the world. I am on a journey of healing and am increasingly triumphing over material concepts of life.

When Love speaks

The language of divine Love is something we inherently understand.

Collier Butler Kaler

As a teacher of English to immigrants navigating life in a new country, I've seen how learning the language of their adopted home has been a lifeline for them, restoring confidence, building important connections for success, and providing a sense of belonging. There

have been many "aha" moments in my classes, in which a spark of understanding lights up a face.

I, too, consider myself a lifetime learner of a language, one that is at the core of my Christian Science faith: the language of divine Love, which is universal and needs no translation. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, "The vital part, the heart and soul of Christian Science, is Love" (p. 113).

Human languages can take years to learn, but the language of Love is something we inherently understand. It's a product of spiritual sense, the capacity to know and understand God, who is Love itself. We naturally "speak" this language because we express God as His creation. It carries us beyond labels and personal history to recognize our and others' true spiritual nature. That clarity doesn't always come easily. Mental noise—fear, doubt, the inner dialogue that criticizes or condemns—can pull thought away from what's spiritually true and lead to darkness and confusion. But even a moment of listening to divine Love can lift thought and let in the light of spiritual understanding.

On the Day of Pentecost, Jesus' followers were gathered "with one accord in one place . . . and were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1, 4). Devout people from many nations had come to Jerusalem for the feast, and each was astonished to hear the message in his or her own language. They understood one another through spiritual sense. They were speaking and hearing the language of divine Love, their true native tongue as children of God. No translation was needed because Love spoke to each heart in a way it could understand.

The belief that one of God's children could be disruptive needed to be healed.

That same Love speaks to us today. I've experienced it firsthand. More than a decade ago, I had a Sunday morning I'll never forget. I awoke in tears, unable to move my neck without pain. Church was a forty-minute drive from home, and my husband asked if I still wanted to go. I said yes, trusting that the Bible Lesson-Sermon

found in the *Christian Science Quarterly* and the music would lift my thought and help me feel closer to God.

A healing that I had heard at a Wednesday testimony meeting at church came to mind. The speaker had been healed of a similar challenge after praying about mending a strained relationship that was “a pain in the neck.” Her use of that idiom made me pause. It’s often used to describe someone or something annoying or bothersome, and it made me realize that neither pain nor any other type of discomfort, whether experienced by me or another, has a physical cause, and therefore can’t be dealt with physically. Both cause and effect are mental. I realized that, in my case, the pain had been brought on by the belief that a houseguest staying with us could disrupt our peace. And it was the belief that one of God’s children could be disruptive that needed to be healed.

After arriving at church, my husband and I slipped through a side door, and in the auditorium, I sat directly in front of three simple words painted on the wall: “God is Love.” I’d seen those words many times before, but this time was different. It felt as if the still, small voice of God Himself were speaking those words to me. And I saw as never before that divine Love is an all-knowing, all-present power, filling all space with good.

At that moment, my neck moved freely. The pain vanished. I felt grounded in my true identity as a perfect, spiritual expression of God, cared for and governed by Love.

Back home, harmony rippled through the household. I had let divine Love transform my thought, and that brought healing, not just to my body but to the atmosphere at home.

Science and Health explains the healing effect of Love this way: “If divine Love is becoming nearer, dearer, and more real to us, matter is then submitting to Spirit” (p. 239).

We’re never beyond the reach of Love’s presence and power. We don’t have to go anywhere to hear Love. It’s already communicating in the language we were made to understand, one that reaches beyond words and reveals what’s spiritually true. When we listen for

Love’s voice, we can hear it. We understand our and others’ spiritual origin and realize what God has always known: that we are loved, safe, and inseparable from Him. To me, that’s the most beautiful “aha” moment of all.

Turning twelve in Mary Baker Eddy’s Church

Our ability to serve is not conditional upon our generation or the era in which we grew up.

Lauren Littell Creighton

Twelve years old might not be an age that is broadly associated with spiritual awakening. A twelve-year-old typically has no formal educational degree and has several years to grow before being considered a legal adult. And yet, Mary Baker Eddy designated in her *Church Manual* the age of twelve to be when individuals could have the privilege of joining in membership with The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston (see p. 35). It occurred to me that there must be significant signs of spiritual awakening taking place at this age for her to have designated this as the right time to consider children ready to be church members.

Christ Jesus’ own experience furnishes proof of this. At twelve years of age, he extended his stay in Jerusalem without his parents’ knowledge in order to discuss Jewish Scripture and law with religious teachers in the Temple. It has always been common in Jewish tradition for boys approaching Jewish adulthood (age twelve or thirteen) to engage in theological discourse with rabbis and teachers, but in Jesus’ case, “all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47).

When his parents found him after three days of searching, his mother admonished the young Jesus for what she perceived to be thoughtless behavior.

Jesus' reply, in part, was, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). It was quite the mature reply to his justifiably concerned mother! But Jesus was being divinely impelled to prepare for his ministry; he was already heeding the call to the Messiahship.

Later, Jesus foretells the signs that will follow those who believe in his teachings: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18). Jesus didn't stipulate any age requirements for that promise. In fact, he also says that his followers must become as little children if they are to enter the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 18:3).

The world may subscribe to the notion that becoming a preteen and then a teenager means an intense focus on physicality and awkwardness. But going through a series of negative age-based phases isn't indicative of the reality of God's creation. God would not allow His beloved children to experience anything that is unlike good or His law of harmonious progress. The true signs of maturing are marked by the revelation of spiritual manhood and womanhood and should be welcomed. We have the opportunity to cherish the fact that true maturation is spiritual.

Mrs. Eddy shares that her own "religious experience seemed to culminate at twelve years of age" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 311). It was during this time and into her teenage years that she refused to accept the doctrine of predestination she had learned in the Congregational Church that her family attended, a teaching that was incongruous with her sense of a God who is all-loving.

Some might feel that it's all very well for Jesus and Mrs. Eddy to be so inspired at twelve, but that it's unrealistic to expect spiritual maturity from others at that age! But is this so? After all, Jesus was showing us the Way, and Mrs. Eddy faithfully followed in his footsteps.

We all have the blessed opportunity to cherish the innate desire within each child to serve God through church membership, and even to be healers. Man, made in God's image and likeness, is not self-serving. As we

acknowledge ourselves to be this spiritual man, our ability to serve is seen to be not conditional upon our generation or the era in which we grew up. A child's ability to be Godlike is dependent on God alone.

I've had several healings thanks to the spiritual uplift inspired in me by children. For instance, I was healed of severe back pain when a young family member simply read aloud to me from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. His sweet innocence while reading one of Mrs. Eddy's hymns lifted me out of the false narrative of being a struggling mortal that I had accepted for myself. The self-pity I had been feeling melted away, right along with the pain. Another time, I was feeling discouraged about a physical problem while attending a Wednesday testimony meeting at a Christian Science summer camp. A camper whispered some encouraging words from a hymn we were about to sing as she sweetly smiled up at me. She said, "Press on" (William Gaskell, *Hymnal*, Hymn 290, adapt.). It was exactly what I needed to hear, and I did ultimately experience healing. Children's innate innocence heals. And adults can learn from the childlike thought that accepts God's love without reservation.

Joining in membership with Mrs. Eddy's Church at the age of twelve can be a joy and privilege for children all over the world to look forward to. And for those of us wishing to see more young thinkers in our church, it's the spiritual view of them as God's reflection that attracts and will draw all people to the truth Jesus taught. When we begin to view children as naturally desiring to grow in their understanding of God and to heal themselves and others, there will be more proof of this truth in our churches.

Contributor comments

These comments are from contributors who have shared feedback with the Journal, Sentinel, and Herald Department about their experience writing for the periodicals.

I wrote a testimony that was three decades overdue. I feel that I need to put my healings on record for the next generation, and this experience was unique. It shows that Christian Science treatment is effective even under adverse conditions and from a distance. —*Catherine*

I'm very new to this but keen to contribute. The part that is hardest for me and requires deep, humble prayer and listening is articulating the metaphysics in a way that doesn't sound trite or clichéd. It's a learning experience, but if those of us who have loved the periodicals and turned to them for inspiration all our lives don't give something back, where will future issues come from? —*Karen*

I edited the article along the lines that the editors recommended. Two paragraphs of the article came together in a very inspired way. I have referred to these paragraphs many times in my prayerful work, and I still feel their spiritual potency. —*Andy*

The editing process requires deeper drafts of Truth to let “the I . . . go to the Father” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 195), which is evidenced by more meekness and by practicing a more expansive, impersonal love. Also, the time from submitting the articles until publication inspires a keener sense of “watch and pray” for church—that the Word of God must accomplish His purpose and cannot return to Him void. I love the demand divine Mind makes to focus on its oneness as the All and Only for me, mine, and all, and I can feel more of that divine energy naturally working throughout the editing process as personal sense submits more and more to divine will. —*Judy*

The editing process helped to clarify the ideas expressed and helped me make a commitment to living more practically, substantially, and regularly the ideas for living grace. —*Diane*

Writing articles is not too difficult for me—but living what I write is the real challenge. After writing this article, I had several temptations to become annoyed and frustrated with different things going on in my life. But each time, I turned back to the truths contained in the article to overcome fear and frustration because I realized it's not what I write but how I live that really blesses the world. And in doing this, I am blessed, too. I feel that writing holds me accountable for how I think and act. If I don't live the truth I believe, then there is no point in writing about it. God truly gives me these articles to write, and they usually begin with a glimmer of inspiration. I know they don't belong to me, so I have learned that it is up to me to protect them and see them through the editing process. . . . I feel so blessed with a holy purpose. —*Karen*

You're never really alone

Katie Penfield

Growing up, I felt I didn't fit in with certain groups at school and in dance class. I always seemed to be the person who was on her own, and I had a hard time making friends. Often, I came home from school crying and frustrated that I seemed so different from everyone else and felt so alone.

Even when I was surrounded by people who I knew loved me, I still felt lonely. I continued to question why people even talked to me. I tried to push down these feelings by spending many hours watching TV, occupying my time scrolling through social media on my phone, and comparing myself to others. But rather than making me feel better, this left me with a more profound sadness.

I grew up attending Christian Science Sunday School and had witnessed the healings my parents and older brother experienced when they turned to Christian Science for physical and mental challenges. But it wasn't until the summer after my sophomore year of

high school, when I was at a summer camp for Christian Scientists, that I thought about praying about these endless feelings of loneliness and depression.

Even when I was surrounded by people who I knew loved me, I still felt lonely.

At camp, we were asked to go out on a “solo,” which is several hours alone in the woods being quiet, praying, and writing your future self a letter. When I’d done this during the previous summer, I hadn’t taken advantage of the time I’d had out there. However, this second time around, I was determined to make the most of the opportunity.

As I was sitting in the woods during my solo, I looked up into the tree canopy and noticed two trees with interlocking branches. Then, the wind blew, and they swayed apart. The wind blew again, and they came back together. As I spent several minutes staring at those trees, the thought came to me that this is kind of an analogy for my relationship with God and how we are never actually alone.

The Bible teaches that God created us in His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26, 27). This means that we, as God’s children, reflect Him. So even when we may feel like we’re not close to God, we still are because we express what God is. We are God’s qualities made manifest. Mary Baker Eddy writes about this in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. She says, “Atonement is the exemplification of man’s unity with God, whereby man reflects divine Truth, Life, and Love” (p. 18). This means we are always united, or one, with God—that’s the “*at-one-ment*” (p. 19) Jesus demonstrated for us.

I started to understand that every one of us reflects God’s goodness. So there is nothing wrong with us that would make us unlovable or alone. Knowing this frees us from believing any negative thoughts that tell us anything different about who we really are or that deny our true, spiritual identity as God’s reflection. And God, who is Love, is always there to comfort us, too. This idea brought me a feeling of peace that I carried with me for the rest of camp.

Later that summer, I moved to a different school, and my spiritual growth continued, strengthening my understanding of my relation to God. I made friends—both at school and in dance classes. These new friends saw the best in me, and I in them. I finished high school happy, whole, and free of loneliness.

I’m grateful for this experience and what it’s taught me about my inseparability from God and His goodness. Although sometimes we may feel alone and lost, God, good, really is always with us, always loving us, and always reminding us of our goodness and perfection.

Smartwatch message forwards healing

Tim Terry

Recently, I was moving boxes of supplies from one level of my house to a lower level. This involved navigating a steep and narrow staircase. As I neared the bottom of the staircase with one large box, I missed a step and hurtled the rest of the way down into a bookcase and a wall.

Initially, I was stunned. The next thing I was aware of was a message from my smartwatch. It stated: “It looks like you’ve taken a hard fall.” I said out loud, sarcastically, “Thanks for that update!” In a few moments, I received several prompts on the watch, including the option to contact emergency services.

And then the watch showed a final option: I could reply with “I did not fall.” Aha! I realized that this was an angel message from God, and I sent that response. This prompted me to turn to prayer as explained in Christian Science to challenge the suggestion that an accident or a fall was actually possible (see Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 424). I was immediately reminded of the psalmist’s promise “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands,

lest thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Psalms 91:11, 12). And I was certain that God, Love, was “underlying, overlying, and encompassing all true being” (*Science and Health*, p. 496)—including mine—right then and there.

There were several bumps and bruises. My hands, arms, and legs were pretty battered, and I felt a lot of pain. The following day, I expanded my prayer to refute the mistaken theological belief that man has “fallen” from grace, as suggested in the third chapter of Genesis, and to refute the claim that the common belief in original sin could bring suffering to my experience.

Less than 48 hours after the fall, I was able to serve two consecutive all-day (eight-hour) shifts in the Christian Science Reading Room, without limitation or pain. And, shortly thereafter, I traveled across the country comfortably for previously scheduled activities.

I’m so grateful to have Christian Science in my life and to be able to witness and experience its availability and practicality to meet all of our needs.

Tim Terry

Bandon, Oregon, US

Quick healing of toothache

Fenna Corry

One of my favorite ideas when praying is from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy. Using Mind as a synonym for God, it says: “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).

Indeed, I’ve found that Christian Science *does* stir our thoughts to a completely different way of thinking.

Though we seem to live in a material world, the Bible tells us that we are spiritual because God—whom the

Bible also tells us is Spirit—created us in His image and likeness (see John 4:24 and Genesis 1:26, 27). And turning our thoughts to God in prayer helps us to better understand our true, wholly spiritual nature.

Changing the basis of our thoughts from a belief that life is material to the understanding of life as spiritual—to the understanding that Life is God, Spirit—can change our experience. We have daily opportunities to challenge limiting, material beliefs and shift to a different basis of thinking. After all, those material beliefs don’t provide us much help, do they?

One day, I woke up at about 2 a.m. with excruciating pain in a tooth. I immediately began to pray. I paced around the house, eager to grasp some helpful, spiritual idea that would lift me above the pain.

Suddenly, I thought about a maze. When you are inside a maze, it’s very difficult to find the way out. But if you were able to rise up above the maze (a drone would come in handy!), the way out would become obvious. I quickly realized that I needed to get out of that mental “maze”—to rise completely above the basis of belief in material being to the basis of understanding that man is made in God’s likeness—completely spiritual and perfect.

Just like that, the pain was gone. It was a dramatic moment for me, reminding me that lifting my thoughts to what is spiritually true leads to healing. It’s a complete change of base!

This experience was a reminder to embrace opportunities such as this one for a new view, for a change of base to a more spiritual view—one that brings healing, harmony, and spiritual growth.

Fenna Corry

Greensboro, North Carolina, US

Devastating damage or fruitful experience?

Ginger Stevens

Over the years, I've had experiences that have brought me a deeper sense of home as a spiritual idea. Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, describes home as "the dearest spot on earth" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 58). Through the study of this Science, I have seen the need to cherish the spiritual attributes of home, such as love, warmth, security, beauty, unselfishness, and comfort.

News accounts often record the harsh and sometimes devastating effects of destructive weather, with many people losing their homes to floods, fires, and strong winds. In the face of situations like these, the true, spiritual concept—which is never dependent on material circumstances—brings us hope and practical solutions. Mrs. Eddy offers this clear promise: "Our surety is in our confidence that we are indeed dwellers in Truth and Love, man's eternal mansion" (*Pulpit and Press*, p. 3). A few years ago, this truth brought healing to me after a destructive storm.

I had moved into a lovely condo that was an answer to my prayers about home. Two years later, however, strong winds and freezing temperatures led to loss of power and other major problems in my community. The sprinkler system in my building burst and sent water pouring into several condos, including mine.

Neighbors who weren't affected by the water knocked on my door right away, carrying towels and buckets. I was greatly moved by the support and care of these neighbors, some of whom I didn't know. And although I had no idea what the next steps would be in this problem, I felt the peace that comes from understanding that God, immortal Principle, governs all creation. *Science and Health* explains, "Undisturbed amid the jarring testimony of the material senses, Science, still enthroned, is unfolding to mortals the immutable, harmonious, divine Principle—is unfolding Life and the universe, ever present and eternal" (p. 306).

At one point, a neighbor who did not have any damage asked me how I was able to remain calm and positive. She had observed quite a few very frustrated and angry owners. I told her that finding this home had clearly been an answer to prayer and that I was trusting in the care of the same divine power now.

Gratitude became an important element in this experience—gratitude for neighbors, for the quick response of the condo board in bringing in a restoration company, for a stay in a nearby hotel, and for prayer-based guidance in arranging for new carpet, cabinets, flooring, etc. I was particularly thankful for a thorough and skillful young carpenter. We had interesting conversations and, as the work was coming to an end, I felt impelled to give him a copy of *Science and Health*, explaining that the ideas in this book were vital to me and might be of interest to him. The next day, he told me that he had begun to read it, and since then, we have kept in touch.

I attribute the speed with which my home was restored entirely to prayer, especially when I learned that the restoration company had received over a thousand storm-related calls for help. My gratitude overflowed. I felt impelled to write an email to the general sales manager of that company, thanking them for their work and including the names of four men who had been an exceptional help. The manager replied, "You made my day—I'm forwarding this email to every employee!"

I look back with a humble, grateful heart on the guidance and blessings I received during this situation—proofs of Mrs. Eddy's beautiful assurance ". . . fear/no ill—since God is good, and loss is gain" ("Mother's Evening Prayer," *Poems*, p. 4).

Ginger Stevens

Lake Oswego, Oregon, US

Pause

Bobby Lewis

You can tell Me—infinite God, good—the truths you know, but make sure you pause at some point and let Me, Truth, tell you the truths I know about you, and yours, and all.

You can ask Me about whatever you would like to, but make sure you pause for a moment and let Me, divine Mind, show you things that would be helpful for you to consider.

You can tell Me what you're upset about—even if it's your sense that I'm absent or not doing enough—but then pause, and let Me, infinite Spirit, assure you of the sufficiency of My ever-presence.

You can tell Me of your shortcomings, sadness, or shame, but then pause and let Me, all-powerful Love, tell you about the unchangeable spiritual goodness of your being—your wholeness, your courage, your uniqueness, your compassion, your artistry, your spiritual strength.

And sometimes, just pause—no prelude, no lead-in, no opening joke needed—and let Me, immortal Life, Truth, Love, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Principle, your divine Father-Mother, show you this:
You are the loved of Love;
you are Mine.

Letters & Conversations

> Liesl Ehmke, “You are a shining light,” July 6, 2026

Thank you for such a helpful, reassuring, uplifting article. I have printed it out so I can read it over and over again.

Sue Smith, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

> Inge Schmidt, “Keeping the faith,” June 29, 2026

This is a great article; it's honest and real and deals with questions or struggles many of us have had. Thank you so much.

Alexis Deacon, Portland, Oregon, US

> June 29, 2026 issue

At our Wednesday testimony meeting, several of us expressed great gratitude for the timely arrival of the *Sentinel* and *The Christian Science Journal* and for the timeliness of the June 29 issue to take us through the week of July Fourth—the articles and the poem were perfect. Two of us shared ideas from it. I am just full of gratitude.

Fenna Corry, Greensboro, North Carolina, US

> Aaron Dyer, "Drought conditions and earnest prayer," May 8, 2023

This article is just the inspiration that I needed today as we face drought in our state.

Ruth Howard, *Parker, Colorado, US*

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