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"What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." — JESUS

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Satisfied: not interested in pot

By SAM SOETARMAN

The only light came from a lone street lamp and the periodic flickering of cheap convenience store lighters. There were about 15 high schoolers in the park. But of them, I was the only one who wasn't smoking marijuana.

I've been a Christian Scientist my entire life. When I was younger, I accepted Christian Science because it was how I was raised. Prayer was something I used mostly when I got sick. There was always the nagging feeling that maybe religion was just a waste of a Sunday morning and nothing more. But through the healings I'd had, I knew there was more to Christian Science, and that evening my trust in God was tried.

Lexi (not her real name) and I had become friends because I had made her laugh at school. The first time we hung out outside of school, she asked me to come to a party at a park near her house. I left my bicycle in her garage, and we walked to the park together. I didn't know anyone else at the party, so I was nervous about fitting in. I was looking forward to the rest of the night until she turned to me and asked, "So, do you smoke?"

"No," I replied.

She looked surprised. "What? Really?"

"No," I responded. "I've never gotten high or drunk."

My mind started racing. Lexi had asked a simple question, but it really got me thinking about *why* I should avoid drugs, and whether I had reason to at all. According to my friends, pot was harmless fun. To my parents it was wrong. I knew that Christian Science tells us it is

not wise to do drugs because they cloud our thinking and turn us away from listening to God. But I *had* always been curious about what it would feel like to get high. Half the kids at my school either smoked or drank. Many of them were my friends. From Lexi's question I figured there would be drugs and

alcohol at the party. Surely there couldn't be any harm in trying them just once?

Her response caught me off-guard: "Then how are you so ... chill?"

Being chill—relaxed, natural, funny—was already part of who I was. Did she really think that drugs were involved? It was then that I realized that my identity was already good and couldn't be enhanced by a material influence. All the desire to try pot slithered away. Hadn't God already provided me with everything I could ever want? Years of Sunday School had taught me that my satisfaction comes from the spiritual qualities I express. But would I be able to show this resolve to everyone else?

Eventually everyone showed up, bringing snacks, sodas ... and pot. My bike was still locked up in Lexi's garage, so I couldn't easily leave. So I stayed. When I was offered a hit, I declined. And despite the fact that everyone else was high, I was able to enjoy myself. The party ended after a few hours, and as I was getting my bike, one of the guys came up to me and asked: "So what's your secret? How do you stay sober?"

The reason why I chose not to use drugs was not because of my parents, or because of blind repulsion, but because I knew that man (meaning all men and

All the desire to try pot slithered away.

There is but one real attraction, that of Spirit.

—Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 102

women created in God’s image) has God-given dominion. I am a complete expression of good, with no need to be preoccupied by material suggestions. I realized that my life is *completely* encompassed by God, Spirit; there is no room for anything else. Friendship, acceptance, creativity, satisfaction—all the good in my life—have a spiritual basis. Man, as “the compound idea of infinite Spirit; the spiritual image and likeness of God; the full representation of Mind” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 591), can be made no more perfect or at peace than he already is.

But I wanted to tell all of this to my friend in a way he could understand. I told him about all the things and people in my life that make me happy: my friends, the places I’ve traveled to, the music I love to write for the piano. And he understood. I knew that greater than any high was the satisfaction I felt in living—expressing God as infinite Life. ●

Sam Soetarman will be a freshman in college in the fall and enjoys playing the piano in his free time.

Originally published in the July 14, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Breaking the ice with Christian Science

By ROBERT WITNEY

“If you found God, and He gave you hope, would it be your secret?” sings British pop star Gary Barlow. I’ve often thought about that question. Having attended Sunday School from an early age and practiced Christian Science more or less consistently throughout my life, I’ve found that one of my greatest joys has been sharing this Science with other people of all faiths and backgrounds.

It has always been important for me to think about my motives for talking

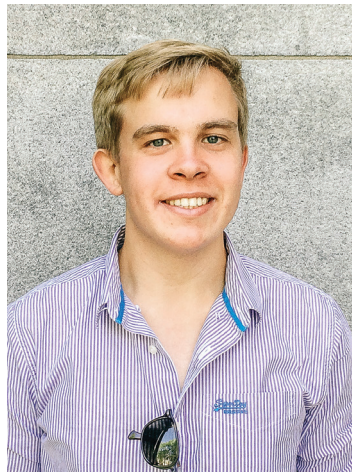
with other people about ideas found in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Adherents of many religions feel that attempting to convert other people to their faith is a loving thing to do, and even necessary to save another from hell. But Mrs. Eddy encourages a very different approach. In *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, in an article titled “Judge Not,” she writes, “When thought dwells in God,—and it should not, to our consciousness, dwell

elsewhere,—one must benefit those who hold a place in one’s memory, whether it be friend or foe, and each share the benefit of that radiation” (p. 290). I love this idea of sharing Christian Science through “radiation.”

Last summer I was grateful to have found work as a waiter at a local restaurant. It seemed like a divinely led idea to me, yet when I emailed my résumé, I was rejected within five minutes. I continued to pray to know that I would be in my right place. I received an email the day after, saying that a position had opened, and that they wanted me to start working in just a few days!

When I began working, I noticed that often the other waiters and waitresses had stressed attitudes. I found it hard to get along with one waitress in particular. It emerged that I attended church, and she frequently questioned my beliefs. I would give her straight answers from my understanding of Christian Science but at the same time insisted that in no way did I mean to impose any of these beliefs on her. She had other ideas. She told me that my beliefs were wrong, and that when the Rapture came, I would be going to hell, and she would be waving down at me from heaven. Instead of reacting to her comments, I chose to leave the conversation and do my work in a different part of the restaurant. I knew that both she and I were reflections of God, and that we both had access to God-given happiness.

During the summer I continued to do my job to the best of my ability while maintaining a sense of strength, devoid



I was able to share my views of God and the Bible with my workmates.

of any need to be stressed or pressured by my interactions with this waitress. The music of Alex Cook, which I would listen to every day on the way to work, really helped calm me before my shifts. I especially found solace in these lyrics: “A heart that’s full of thanks cannot be broken / This heart of mine keeps wishing, working, and hoping” (“A heart that cannot be broken,” *Arrival*).

Things calmed down with that waitress. On occasion she would give me heartfelt advice not to be so kind to people, in the worry that I would be taken advantage of. While I was grateful for her concern, I knew I didn’t need to take that advice to heart. I also noticed that work was becoming a lot less stressful—not just for me but for the whole staff. What originally seemed to be a gap between those of English nationality and those who had emigrated from other countries had closed. By the end of the summer, there was a lot more harmony at the pub.

Returning to work last winter, I found my workmates had a new interest in religion. I would never begin conversations on the subject, but they would ask me about my beliefs, and we would have great open-minded discussions. Religion can be misconstrued, but once you start talking to people about spirituality, you may find out you have many beliefs and values in common. Our talks about spirituality led to discussion about Christian Science specifically, and I was able to share my views of God and the Bible with my workmates.

I often compare my motives for sharing Christian Science to my motives for

sharing a TV show I am a fan of. I don't share a TV show because I feel a sense of responsibility to the producers. I do it because I love the show and want to express the joy it gives me. I want to share Christian Science because it makes me happy, and I know it can make others happy, too. After all, Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health*: "Happiness is spiritual, born of Truth and Love. It is unselfish; therefore it cannot exist alone, but requires all mankind to share it" (p. 57).

Spiritual revelation is a fact of being, and we can trust that "God is working His purpose out" (Arthur C. Ainger, *Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 82). As Hymn 82 continues, "The earth shall be filled with the glory of God / As the waters cover the sea." ●

Robert Witney lives in Fleet, Hampshire, England, and is spending the summer of 2014 as an intern at The Mother Church in Boston.

This article originally appeared as a "Young voices" blog on JSH-Online.com.

Originally published in the July 21 & 28, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

From fear to freedom

By MELISSA WORKMAN

I couldn't fall asleep. The next day I would move into my college dorm, and I felt overcome by a fear of the unknown. I tossed and turned and finally got out of bed and sat at my computer. I went to the Christian Science website that is now time4thinkers.com. Because my fear seemed centered on the unknown, I decided to look up articles on change. One article referenced part of Hymn No. 148 from the *Christian Science Hymnal*:

In heavenly Love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?
(Anna L. Waring)

Tears streamed down my face as I read this excerpt. It was an answered prayer, and it comforted me. This hymn was telling me I didn't need to fear, because the only place I could be was with God, heavenly Love. And even though my mind was racing like a roaring storm, God was still surrounding and protecting me. My thoughts finally calmed down, and I was able to rest.

Though my move into the dorm went smoothly, those first days of college life were tumultuous. I felt as if I was on a roller coaster of emotion. Some moments were bright and joyous; others were filled with fear and loneliness. I called a Christian Science practitioner to pray with me because I felt helpless in the face of these dark thoughts. She shared ideas I would cling to throughout the day, such as the idea that I was companioning with



angels. The definition of *angels* in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy had always been helpful to me, so I loved the idea that my companions were "... spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect" and "the inspiration of goodness, purity, and immortality ..." (p. 581). Recognizing this present companionship helped relieve fears of loneliness.

About a week into college, I met with my academic advisor. He immediately recognized the dark place I was in. Though he had heard of Christian Science and knew that a Christian Science practitioner was praying with me, he lovingly mentioned that I could meet with the college therapist. Later, I thought about what he had said. It was as if there were two paths in front of me: I could continue praying with the Christian Science practitioner, or I could talk with the psychologist. But really, there wasn't a choice. Deep down, I knew talking with the psychologist wouldn't satisfy my yearning to learn more about the unchanging source of joy in my life: God.

I continued working with the Christian Science practitioner, but I felt different. I had committed to getting to know God, and that meant I realized healing

was possible. There was a way out of this hole of fear because I recognized my true identity as a free, love-filled, joyous child of God.

Slowly but surely, my days became less like a pendulum swinging back and forth. I felt more grounded in the fact that God was the only power in my life. Within a few weeks, I felt totally new and completely free from any feelings of fear or depression.

I was so grateful for the love and support of my friends and family, expressed in sweet, heartfelt ways, which helped turn me from darkness to light. And I was most grateful of all to God for showing me that as His child, I am never alone. ●

Melissa Workman lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

This was originally shared as part of The Mother Church's Wednesday Online testimony meeting. It is also a "Young voices" blog on JSH-Online.com.

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emotion.*

Originally published in the August 11, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Ascending in thought

By COURTLYN REEKSTIN

How do you uplift your thought? It sounds easy enough—just pray, affirming spiritual truths for yourself that you know are helpful! However, I’m learning that actually rising above daily struggles can be quite an endeavor.

Last summer I had the opportunity to travel to Peru with my DiscoveryBound National Leadership Council (NLC) class, a leadership council for high school students who are Christian Scientists and are dedicated to servant leadership based on the teachings of Christ Jesus.

In the weeks leading up to our trip, various class members sent out inspirational emails, and throughout our trip we had “Christian Science practitioners of the day,” which allowed my classmates and me to serve along with our designated *Journal*-listed practitioner as spiritual workers for the class. I’d also been praying to feel inspired and know that God is supreme. I knew I could feel protected from any suggestions that something could interfere with my health or joy.

At points on our trip, many members of my class, including me, appeared to be suffering from food poisoning. Thankfully, many of my classmates experienced quick healings.

When I started to feel ill, immediately one of my group leaders and I began praying and working with passages from *Science and Health with Key to the Scrip-*

tures by Mary Baker Eddy, and many of my classmates began sharing spiritual truths with me.

That night as my group leader read to me from *Science and Health*, I prayed with the ideas she was sharing. Despite the good thoughts I was working with, I began to feel very fearful because I was not able to retain any food or drink, and I was worried what would happen if that continued the next day. We were heading to Machu

Picchu in the morning, an excursion that I had been looking forward to since the beginning of the service trip, but there would be no bathroom facilities in the park.

The morning of our excursion, most of my classmates woke up excited and ready for a day of hiking, feeling strong and healthy. I woke up still not feeling well but held close to the idea that I am spiritual, made in the perfect image and likeness of God (see Genesis 1:26, 27), and that because of this, suffering and illness were not part of God’s plan for me. Only God’s harmony could reign supreme, and discord was not part of this trip or me.

I had come to Peru to do good and could not be punished for that. As Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, “Whatever it is your duty to do, you can do without harm to yourself” (p. 385). While I knew I could stay back if I needed to, I also knew it was a right activity to serve in Peru and experience a joyful

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day with my NLC class at Machu Picchu, and I realized I could in no way be burdened when I had pure motives.

As we arrived at Machu Picchu, our leaders informed us that we would be climbing Huayna Picchu, the smaller of the two mountains that is generally featured in advertisements. I began to

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worry again, fearing that I was not in the right condition to complete a difficult hike and that I would lag behind my fit and capable class members.

However, as I started the climb up the mountain with two of my friends by my side, part of the first verse of Hymn 139 from the *Christian Science Hymnal* came to mind. It reads, “I walk with Love along the way” (Minnie M. H. Ayers). For each step up the mountain, I said one of the words in this line, declaring divine Love’s perfection and my freedom. Rather than feeling weary and nauseated as I climbed higher, I began to feel freer and spiritually empowered.

Part of the third verse from Hymn 136 also came to mind: “I climb, with joy, the heights of Mind, / To soar o’er time and space” (Violet Hay, © CSBD). This verse described what I was doing. I was climbing this mountain with joy

and dominion—the spiritual “heights of Mind.” I was with my supportive friends, surrounded by divine Love, and could not be deprived of my health. And, I was “soar[ing]” over “time and space,” or, in other words, I was uplifting my thought above any material limitations, as I “walk[ed] with Love,” God, up the mountain!

The analogy between climbing and uplifting my thought suddenly became very clear to me as I neared the top. My ascent up Huayna Picchu paralleled the ascension of my thought. As I came closer and closer to the precipice (and the hike became more difficult), my thought rose higher and higher above all mental suggestions that tried to tell me I should feel exhausted, dizzy, nauseated, or incapable.

When I reached the peak, I realized I was completely free of all signs of illness, and I knew my thought was at its highest. I had not only conquered hiking Huayna Picchu but I had also prevailed over sickness and made good time, reaching the top around the same time as the majority of my class.

Now, whenever I am struggling to overcome a daunting challenge, I remember to uplift my thought and view each struggle not as a hardship but as an opportunity to ascend in thought. ●

Courtlyn Reekstin attends The Principia and will be a senior in high school in the fall. She loves laughing with her friends, spending time with family, and traveling.

Originally published in the August 25, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Pole vault perfection

By ALI MARSH

This past spring I attempted to launch myself over a bar with a bendy stick. I learned how to pole vault.

Pole vaulting was an amazing and challenging new experience for me, and what I'd heard about injuries didn't stop me from trying out for the high school team.

Once I'd made the team, however, I quickly found that doing the same thing over and over again, striving for perfection, could be very discouraging. So I began to pray to know that because I'm God's image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26, 27), I express all of God's qualities. I also tried to express just as much life, enthusiasm, and gracefulness as a professional athlete. Soon, I had some huge breakthroughs.

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I learned to run faster and jump higher, and I cleared the bar a foot higher than I had been able to before.

A few days later I noticed that my hip, which had started getting sore at the beginning of the season, was both-

ering me more and more. I was annoyed that this problem began right when I was doing so well. I hadn't prayed about this at first because it hadn't bothered me too much, and I'd thought it would just go away on its own.

I needed to stand up for myself.

My hip felt worse, and it was difficult for me to keep vaulting throughout practice. My coach insisted that I see the school trainer about it.

The trainer suggested I do physical therapy and told me it could keep getting worse. I thought to myself that I'd just "push through" to the end of the season and would be fine when I could rest afterward.

Then during physical education class the next day, I twisted my ankle. This brought me to my spiritual senses! I had let "error"—or the false idea that I could be vulnerable and hurt and just needed to live with pain for a while—affect my pole vaulting, and now my ankle was hurt, too? I needed to stand up for myself and my understanding of truth.

There was no reason I couldn't be out playing and pole vaulting with my friends, because my abilities were from God, and I was doing these activities to express joy and glorify God.

I pulled up the text of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy on my phone and read some of it in class. Although I can't remember the passages I read, I was very comforted. I didn't need to let error infiltrate my

thoughts. I didn't need to feel helpless; I could stand up to the negative mental suggestions that I was hurt and in pain.

That night I told my mom what had been going on and also called a Christian Science practitioner. The first thing the practitioner asked me was "How is your purple hair?" I told him I didn't have purple hair. Suddenly, I saw it was the same with my injuries.

I realized that the only problem was my belief that I had been injured. God had always been keeping me safe and well. And my previous resolution to just "push through" the hurt would never help me because it started from the standpoint that I had been hurt in

the first place. To God, I had always been loved and perfect and had remained safe the whole time. I was never hurt. I was actually completely whole and perfect!

After I had this realization, the injuries melted away into the nothingness they had been all along. I finished the season with a new personal best and an invitation to a varsity league meet. Pole vault has become my new favorite sport. I'm already looking forward to the next season! ●

Ali Marsh is a tenth grade gymnast and pole vaulter. She loves reading and wants to study nanotechnology in college.

Originally published in the September 8, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

United through Love

By EMILY

I attend a Christian Science Sunday School, where I learn about the Bible and Christ Jesus' healing works. I also learn that God is infinite good and that His creation is good. Our teachers show us that we can practice what we learn in all our activities and lean on God when we face challenges. Because I love sports and play for my high school's varsity soccer team, I have many opportunities to apply these teachings during practices and matches.

In July of last year, when I spent two weeks at a summer camp for Christian Scientists in the United States, I had a simple but unforgettable experience.

At these camps, we can share with our friends what we learn in Sunday School. In our daily activities, the camp counselors help us recognize that God is always present, and knowing this makes us feel safe and at peace. After my home, camp is my favorite place! At camp, we have opportunities to overcome limits and to grow spiritually, free from fear and insecurity. There are activities, adventures, and sports like soccer.

During one of our soccer matches, I fell on the ground after colliding with another player, and my foot hurt a lot. In situations like this I used to first cry

and check if I was injured and then turn to prayer. But this time I felt immediately uplifted by thoughts of love from the whole group.

My counselors, who were young Christian Scientists, quickly said out loud that divine Love, God, was present right then and there, and that all could only be well. They also assured me that since this soccer match was an activity through which we were expressing qualities from our Father-Mother God,

there couldn't be any accident to take away my joy. I got up quickly, resumed playing, and even scored a goal!

Later my mom reminded me that God is "a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). By acknowledging this fact, we don't get paralyzed by a problem. Prayer is active, because it enables us to deny that anything opposed to God is real and realize that God is omnipresent. With this experience I understood that God is our "first aid"—that we can always turn to Him first.

I know we can be united in thoughts of love, no matter where we are, because we all reflect God, omnipresent Love. But, on that occasion at camp, being in an environment where everybody practices Christian Science and shares the purpose of living in harmony with God, I felt it made all the difference! I was grateful for knowing that my friends were praying, as I was.



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Here in Brazil, young Christian Science students created a group on WhatsApp, an app that facilitates exchanging text messages. Every day someone shares a thought with the group, and I see this as an opportunity to continue embracing my friends and being embraced by them in thoughts of love.

Recently I shared with this group the following citation from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "To those

leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings" (p. vii). I can lean on the sustaining infinite, divine Love, and always feel protected by Love. And by doing this, I can play sports with freedom, without fear of getting hurt.

When we play sports, we have the opportunity to express qualities such as love, unity, and excellence. By knowing that we reflect God's qualities, we are able to excel in any activity and also rest assured that we are always safe in the presence of good. ●

Emily likes to play soccer, go to the beach, and spend time with her friends.

Emily's article was originally in Portuguese and was published in the July 2014 German, French, Portuguese, and Spanish editions of *The Herald of Christian Science*.

Originally published in the September 22, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

A healing on Mt. Kenya

By SHEA ORTH-MOORE

“This hike will be difficult,” the outfitter warned. “If you get altitude sickness, you’ll feel nauseated and lightheaded, and you may not be able to reach the summit.” I’d grown up climbing mountains, but his words scared me. What if I got sick on the hike?

I attend an international school in Kenya, where children of 91 different nationalities study alongside one another. At the beginning of ninth grade we climb Mt. Kenya, the second-highest mountain in Africa, for our class trip. This is a highly anticipated rite of passage into high school, and I was very excited about the climb.

But when we went through the pre-trip training with the outfitter, the issue of altitude sickness was raised many times. Even though I had already peaked eight of the Collegiate Peaks in Colorado during summer camp—all around 14,000 feet high—this topic had never been dwelt on before. The summer camp is for Christian Scientists, and our pre-trips had involved metaphysical preparation and a pure thought environment, free from fear and an emphasis on physical problems. So it was a bit alarming to hear so much about altitude sickness.

The first few days of the trip went smoothly, and I was enjoying myself so much. But on the third day, the day before we would reach the peak, my best friend started falling behind, saying she didn’t feel so well. The trip leaders were quick to diagnose her symptoms as al-

titude sickness. There had been a lot of fear and conversation about altitude sickness that day, and I was very worried about the symptoms my friend was experiencing. Soon I also began feeling tired and dizzy.

As we approached our camp for the night, I was doubting more and more that I would be able to peak the next day. The people around me were also commenting on my condition.

Before going to bed early, I spent some time in prayer. I thought about a quote from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”—which also appears as an epigraph before the Preface of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. I realized that my experience had to do with mortal mind—the supposed power of material beliefs that claim to be opposed to God, but are really just illusions.

In the case of altitude sickness, mortal mind was trying to convince me that I should feel tired and sick. But as soon as I decided to watch what I let into my thought, I could clearly see that being on the trip was an opportunity for me to express God, and that was my real activity on this climb.

The next day we woke up early to peak. My friend and I were still wondering about our ability to reach the top. We came to a steep uphill section that seemed to stretch on forever. My friend and I had fallen to the back of the group,

I started humming hymns to myself, and this seemed to lift up my friend and others around me.

and the trip leader quietly told us that if we weren't able to get up the hill by a certain point, we'd have to turn around.

This was a turning point in my thinking. That day the sun was bright, and we were all wearing our sunglasses. When I

COURTESY PHOTO



feel the sun's warmth, it reminds me of how God's love for me is always pouring forth. This really raised my spirits.

Then I remembered something one of the leaders had said during the pre-trip: that anyone can climb Mt. Kenya because in reality the hike is 60 percent mental and 40 percent physical. I started thinking about how we can't let physical limitations run our life because, as Mrs. Eddy says, "All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all" (*Science and Health*, p. 468). We are the "manifestation" part—the manifestation of God. I didn't have to let fear dictate what I could and could not do, because infinite Mind was in control.

I also included my friend in these prayers, recognizing that God was uplifting her, too. Whenever I had been on a trip at Christian Science summer camp,

we had always sung hymns to each other when there was a need for inspiration. So I started humming hymns to myself, and this seemed to lift up my friend and others around me as well.

Not only my friend and I but everyone in the group ended up peaking within the time frame. By the time we got to base camp, we were all ready to enjoy the last day of the trip.

The most wonderful thing about this healing was the number of people who told me they had seen the change in my outlook and attitude and knew that if I could peak, so could they. My principal's wife, my class advisor, and one

of the parent chaperones all commented on the shift. I was happy that not only did I have a change in thought but this healing was able to help others as well. It showed me that when you build a spiritual fire within, others can benefit from the warmth, too.

This experience made me really appreciate being able to attend a summer camp with fellow students of Christian Science. I love being able to hike in a supportive environment, where God's healing presence is acknowledged and celebrated. ●

Shea Orth-Moore is a senior in high school. She loves to hike and explore the great outdoors. Shea also loves getting involved in her community through service projects and the Global Issues Network, an international student group.

Originally published in the October 6, 2014, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Seeing 'the perfect man'

By PAIGE PEARSON

Working with children who have been labelled as having special needs has allowed me to apply Christian Science to my daily life. I have learned to expect that barriers can be broken and to practice patience while working to see beyond physical limitations.

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy writes: "Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God's own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick" (pp. 476–477). This lesson of beholding the perfect man has guided me through my life, especially through times where circumstances have seemed overwhelming.

One of the times when I was best able to see the necessity of following Christ Jesus' example was when I traveled to Rwanda. My friend and I were looking for an opportunity to volunteer overseas, and in searching for a trip, we had both been praying. We were struggling to make a choice between two trips: one to Tanzania and the other to Vietnam. As we were nearing the deadline to make a final decision, she and I came across a trip to Rwanda that we hadn't seen before. We signed up for this trip with confidence that we were being led to our right place.

Once I was in Rwanda, I began working with a group of kids who were all orphans. They had been cast out of their families as a result of their differences. The limitations they were dealing with were often viewed as signs of "the devil" or sinning.

After my first day, I felt so sad I was tempted to never go back to the orphanage. To overcome this, I was able to take some time for myself with my *Christian Science Hymnal* and pray. The hymn I looked at was No. 203. Here's part of the first verse:

O Father, may we bear each hour
The flag of hope and peace unfurled,
And mirror forth Love's sacred power
To feed and bless a hungry world.
(Lewie Prittie Castellain, © CSBD)

This verse had a powerful influence on me. The idea of bearing "the flag of hope and peace" gave me a sense of purpose. My confidence in fulfilling this purpose was found in the lines "And mirror forth Love's sacred power / To feed and bless a hungry world." I could probably go on forever about how every single word of this hymn had extreme significance and inspired me to continue my work on this trip!

I was also dealing with an internal struggle of feeling animosity toward people who would stare at the children on our daily walk, but I prayed to know that "Love's sacred power" was in charge. Each day while I was volunteering at the orphanage, we would walk out of a house onto the streets of our town. The teenagers and staff would hold the hands of the children and begin walking up the street, laughing and playing games.

Over time, we began actively expressing love and waving to the people who were staring. The children got the biggest smiles on their faces as they greeted the townspeople. It still brings a smile to my face when I think about

the lessons that children constantly teach me in opening my eyes more to divine Love.

Gradually, more and more people responded to the children, and a few even came over to say hi. This experience taught me that my initial feeling of repulsion toward the bystanders who, in my eyes, were being judgmental was actually a reflection of my own thought toward them. It was incredible to see how a change of thought to loving our neighbors as Christ Jesus taught manifested itself in a more positive interaction with the locals.

I'd like to share another healing I witnessed one summer when I volunteered at a camp for young people who are labelled developmentally disabled. The camper I was working with often tried to harm herself, and this was very scary for me.

One day, this sweet girl threw a tantrum that was worse than any she'd had in the past. The situation looked very bad. The camper was screaming and attacking anyone who tried to stop her. She had already aggressively antagonized me and a few other of the camp staff before the nurse was able to help us move her into another room. I sat by this camper's side until she would let me move closer, then tucked her in for a nap.

While she napped, I sat next to her praying and thinking to myself: "She doesn't have to go through this." She was created by God, not with a disability, but in His image and likeness.



This lesson of beholding the perfect man has guided me through my life.

Those ideas stuck with me for the rest of the session, and whenever it seemed that this camper was going to throw another tantrum, I was able to look into her eyes and say: "You don't have to hurt yourself. You're perfect. I love you." This was my way of voicing to her what I was seeing about her in my prayers. I never experienced another issue with tantrums from my sweet camper. Her behavior was flawless, and we

were able to have a great summer.

These are just a few examples of how a change in my thought led to a change in circumstance. To me, the significant progress I witnessed in my camper is proof of the benefit of seeing people as spiritual, even if full healing for them hasn't come yet. I love to pray from the basis of knowing that we are all created whole and complete by God, and that I can help bring progress for these children by acknowledging this.

Whenever I feel anxious as a result of things that take place during my continuing work with children, or even when praying about illness or social issues, I turn back to some of the lessons I learned working at the orphanage in Rwanda and working with campers at home in the United States. I am able to see that, in trusting God, everything in my life does "work together for good" (Romans 8:28). ●

Paige Pearson is a senior in high school. She plays volleyball, runs track, and loves spending time with her friends.

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God's care while scuba diving

By JUNO ENOCH

Last year my mom, dad, brother Alistair, and I visited the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Queensland, Australia. My dad and I planned to scuba dive. First, I needed to get certification. While I was a bit nervous about this, I tried to settle my thoughts, knowing this was a great opportunity and one I shouldn't

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I trusted in God and kept going, knowing I was glorifying God through the joy in my dive.

miss! So I thought about how no harm could come to me because I am one of God's children. And how, as I'd learned in Sunday School, God's everlasting love is always present. God's love protects and shelters me and all of His children, constantly.

After a lot of classroom work, I put on my gear and entered the pool, which is shallow where you enter, but drops off to about 15 feet. As soon as I deflated my buoyancy control device and submerged, I felt like I wanted to stay down there forever. It was such an exciting, unfamiliar feeling, and I loved it!

When you descend to another depth, you must "equalize," which means using a technique to lessen the pressure on your ears as you go. I was descending as instructed but found I was unable to

equalize. My ears hurt and I felt afraid.

I was able to touch the bottom of the pool with my feet, and I ascended slowly, as my training required. But before going down again, I took a moment to pray. I thought about how what felt like injury or pain was just an illusion and not part of the perfect me, the real me, since I am spiritual and a child of God.

I descended again, trying to remain with the idea that God was with me, guiding and protecting me. I tried to equalize but still could not. Instead of panicking, I trusted in God and kept going, knowing I was glorifying God through the joy in my dive. When I reached the bottom, I was not in pain and was able to equalize.

The rest of the training went without a hitch, and I was so grateful. When we were finally able to do our first ocean dives in the Great Barrier Reef, for a moment I worried about equalizing because we were going much deeper than we had been in the training pool. But I prayed again, reminding myself that God is in total control. I was able to equalize easily and had an amazing experience that I will never forget!

I have since gone on night dives, wreck dives, and more open water dives with no fear, knowing that I am safe with God. And I appreciate the harmony and beauty that I find underwater, which reminds me of the spiritual beauty and harmony of God's kingdom. ●

Juno is in eighth grade. She loves animals and learning about the environment and is taking bass (music) lessons. She just moved with her family from Australia to Florida, where she hopes to dive on a regular basis.

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Peace and confidence on test day

By EMILY STAUNTON

Last April, as the end of the school year approached, I was feeling nervous about two upcoming AP (Advanced Placement) exams.

Although I had been preparing, I questioned this preparation and tried to cram in extra studying. I was doing much better in my AP English class than I had originally anticipated, but I still felt apprehensive because I had spent less time with the content than I had in getting ready for my US History exam. I definitely wasn't trusting God or turning to Him much, although I knew I should be doing some spiritual preparation.

About two days before the English exam, I woke up and had the '80s song "Walking on sunshine" by Katrina and the Waves going through my head. It's a positive and upbeat love song. This is a song I rarely think about, so I thought it could be a spiritual intuition. At first, though, I couldn't really figure out the significance behind this song.

I did some morning spiritual study by looking up exam-related articles on JSH-Online.com. I found inspiration from many articles, but I especially gained some comfort and learned about a better spiritual basis to start from by reading "The deeper demands at exam time" (Louisa Sonstroem, February 7, 2011, *The Christian Science Journal*, Web original). What helped me the most was a quote the author mentioned from Mary

Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science: "Truth, Life, and Love are the only legitimate and eternal demands on man, and they are spiritual lawgivers, enforcing obedience through divine statutes" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 184).

This gave me new perspective and took off a lot of pressure. The quote reminded me that my only job was to recognize and express qualities of God, such as intelligence, purity, honesty, joy, strength, humility, and alertness, to the best of my ability.

I realized that God didn't see me as struggling to accomplish a human task of achieving a good score. Instead, God saw me as already perfect, whole, and complete, with all the intelligence I needed, since I am the reflection of divine Mind. My task was to be an authentic and trusting transparency for Life, Truth, and Love. God would take care of the rest.

After establishing in my thought my relationship to God and my real duties to Him, I was inspired to look up the definition of *sun* in *Science and Health*, since I was still curious why the song "Walking on Sunshine" had come to mind. Mrs. Eddy writes: "SUN. The symbol of Soul governing man,—of Truth, Life, and Love" (p. 595). Truth, Life, and Love ... the same things that are the only "legitimate" demands on us! I then understood that spiritual intuition had led

COURTESY PHOTO



me to pay attention to the song, and that was a springboard to deeper avenues of inspiration. To tie things all together, I saw that with both of my exams, I would be “walking” with—relying on—Life, Truth, and Love, which are always present, so they’re always with me.

I was amazed by how deep and perfectly applicable God’s messages were for me. I realized I could see these “legitimate and eternal demands” as indicating that I was already shining forth God’s qualities, because I am God’s expression. I felt much calmer and enthusiastic about the upcoming English exam. Through realizing the truth about myself, I wasn’t afraid anymore.

When I went into the exam, I was still a little nervous, but I was also more enthusiastic and trusting. I knew that God, divine Mind, was right there with me, expressing Himself in me. I noticed how peaceful and confident I was as I worked on the exam’s essays.

During my last essay, I felt even more of God’s presence. I was able to incorporate new examples that came to thought. I had previously worried about being able to think of my own examples for the last

God didn’t see me as struggling to accomplish a human task of achieving a good score.

essay, but I saw how God, or Mind, supplied me with all the intelligence I needed. I just had to be shining, expressing, and listening. These ideas also helped me when I took my US History

exam the following week.

I was grateful for this experience but wasn’t sure how I had done on my AP exams until July, when I learned I had earned the highest score possible on both. My whole experience in my AP classes had been God-guided. It was wonderful to see the natural good that came about by understanding and expressing Life, Truth, and Love and trusting in my abilities as the reflection of Mind. ●

Emily Staunton is a part of the DiscoveryBound National Leadership Council and is a junior in high school. She enjoys swimming, singing, and spending time with family.

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Sunday School students from South Africa share ...

By **KATHERINE BROKENS**HA, university student

Last year was both an exciting and a challenging year for me, as I moved far away from home to start my first year of university. One morning I woke up feeling weak and had a headache, and the symptoms got worse throughout the day. I had felt like this a few days earlier, but it hadn't been as bad and I hadn't bothered to pray about it.

I began to feel worried and sorry for myself, as I had to deal with this on my own, without my mom's presence. That night I decided to talk to a friend of mine, a Christian Scientist, and ask her for some helpful ideas.

She reminded me of Mary Baker Eddy's poem "Christ my refuge," which has been set to music as Hymn No. 253 in the *Christian Science Hymnal*. We focused on these verses:

And wake a white-winged angel throng
Of thoughts, illumed
By faith, and breathed in raptured song,
With love perfumed.

Then His unveiled, sweet mercies show
Life's burdens light.
I kiss the cross, and wake to know
A world more bright.

My friend said the poem was a beautiful way of describing how spiritual intuitions, angel thoughts, min-

ister to us and bring a sense of calm, peace, and love, helping us know that we are the treasured, perfect child of God. We cannot reflect anything but Godlike qualities.

I prayed with these ideas and held on to them every time a thought of sickness came to mind. The next morning, I woke up feeling completely well. This healing reminded me of the importance of leaning on God no matter how far or close we are from home.

By **CHRISTINE BROKENS**HA, high school student

I have learned that my understanding of God will help me through whatever problems I am struggling with, whether it's a case of the nerves the night before an academic exam or it's feeling nervous while taking the exam itself.

During my end-of-year exams, one day I had three exams to write. By my third one, on history, I was feeling overwhelmed and scared. The previous night I had been studying for this exam, and while going through my notes, I had felt inspired to go through one or two particular sources. I obeyed this angel message from God and made sure that I fully understood the sources.

As I paged through my history exam, at first feeling tired and worried, I noticed that one of the sources the exam was based on was one I'd reviewed the





previous night! Waves of reassurance washed through me, and I knew that God, divine Mind, was with me and was giving me the strength and wisdom to do what felt like a strenuous task. From that point on, I felt happy and refreshed.

Leaning on God helped me in similar ways throughout my other exams. I continually felt led to study certain sections or go through particular past papers. I found that the most important thing to do during exams is to trust God and listen for His angel messages, which guide us.

By **LIAM WHITFIELD**, high school student

I was so grateful for a healing that I had on a seven-day school hiking/camping trip. It was the night before



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the biggest hike of the whole trip, and we were playing soccer on a field next to our campsite. I injured my back while I was playing. I was really worried because whenever I moved or walked, a sharp pain would go up my back.

I knew this situation had to be sorted out before beginning a long hike the next morning, so I went into my tent and prayed. I started off by remembering these words from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy,

which are on the wall of my Sunday School: “Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need” (p. 494). I also prayed to know that I am the perfect reflection of God, made in His image and likeness.

I knew that if I was perfect, nothing was wrong with me, and therefore I was actually fine. I stayed with these thoughts as my friends came into my tent to play cards. A while later I realized my back wasn’t painful at all. I was completely healed and able to do the hike the next day. ●



Never lost

By CLOWEL

The events I am about to share with you happened when I was seven years old.

It was the night before Christmas. My parents had left for church to prepare the Thanksgiving service we hold every year on December 25 at church. [Editor's note: Clowel is from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. In different parts of the world, branch Churches of Christ, Scientist, sometimes schedule the special Thanksgiving Day service, provided for in the *Church Manual* by Mary Baker Eddy, at times other than at the end of November.] I was supposed to spend the night with a Christian Science family—a daughter in the family is my friend.

My friend and her young aunt came to pick me up and bring me to their house. They lived far away from us. When we got off the bus, we had to pass through a market filled with people going in all directions. We had to walk in a one-person line and zigzag through the crowd. I did not know the way to get to my friend's house. Since my friend and her aunt walked fast, I suddenly did not see them any longer in front of me, and soon I did not know where to go. I was lost.

I kept on walking, looking for them. Since I could not find them, I started crying. The people passing by made a circle around me to see what was going on, and I explained to them what had happened. But since I did not know one of our local languages, Lingala, very well, I spoke to them in French. However, they could not understand me because they could speak only Lingala. I understood a little of what they were saying, but I could not answer in Lingala. They were frustrated, and so was I!

A few minutes later, I calmed down and I thought of God, who is everywhere, as I had learned in the Christian Science Sunday School. I felt that God was with me and that He was taking care of me. I remembered that at home I often sang Hymn 53 from the *Christian Science Hymnal* with my mother. The hymn reads:

Everlasting arms of Love
Are beneath, around, above;
God it is who bears us on,
His the arm we lean upon.

He our ever-present guide
Faithful is, whate'er betide;
Gladly then we journey on,
With His arm to lean upon.

From earth's fears and vain alarms
Safe in His encircling arms,
He will keep us all the way,
God, our refuge, strength and stay.

(John R. Macduff, adapt. © CSBD)

When I thought of this hymn, I felt completely at peace and I sang it with all my heart. Shortly after, I was able to find someone who spoke French and could help me get home safely. My older sister called my parents, who then called my friend's family to tell them that I had returned home. We were all very grateful to God for protecting me and for returning me home safe and sound. And the next day we had a wonderful Christmas! ●

When she is not in school, Clowel likes to have fun on her computer and to help her mother in the kitchen.

Originally written in French, this article first appeared in the October 2014 Portuguese, Spanish, French, and German editions of the *Herald of Christian Science*.

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Horsemanship and healing

By JULIA STEVERMER

I find it amazing how God’s love is always present, always surrounding and protecting us. This summer, I went to a camp for Christian Scientists, where I got to ride a horse named Remington. He was a sweetheart on rides—that is, unless we were going back home to the corral.

The first time Remington acted up was when we were exiting an arena and heading back. He started crow-hopping and lunging, trying to run home. I pulled on the reins, but it was no use. He repeatedly tried to bolt, until at last he stopped when we hit the trail.

After that, I was extremely nervous on him when headed home. I would always tense up, lean forward, and shorten the reins. That’s when negative thoughts would come to me, like, “He’s going to take off again,” or, “He’s such a bad horse!” or even, “Just get off him and quit the horsemanship program.” Because I was not ready to fall off, hate my horse, or quit horsemanship, I had to resolve these conflicts.

The healing took some time, but the result was complete and worthwhile. It started on the first-session camp-out as we were riding to our campsite. We were traveling along a trail, but little did I know there was an access trail leading back to the corral. We were crossing a stream, when Remington, wanting to go home, bolted ahead of another horse, only stopping when I used the reins. And

when we started up again, Remington bolted. Again I used the reins, and he stopped. The counselors then asked me to dismount and lead him on foot.

At this point, it was very hard to reject negative thoughts. Just then, a verse from a hymn with words by Mary Baker Eddy came to me. It was:

Aye, darkling sense, arise, go hence!

Our God is good.

False fears are foes—truth tatters those,
When understood.

(Christian Science Hymnal, No. 160)

I translated “darkling sense” to “dark thoughts” so for me, the hymn said: “Hey, dark thoughts, get out of here! God didn’t create you. Fears aren’t real and can’t help us, so truth destroys them when you understand what truth actually is.”

I prayed with that a lot, and every time a fear would come, I would replace it with a right thought, like “Remington is an idea of Love. You, error, are not! So just go away.”

We tried remounting several times, but Remington would always take off before my feet were in the stirrups. At first this discouraged me, but I kept praying, and after some help from one of the counselors, Remington’s behavior improved.

I was assigned to Remington for the next session, too, which I loved, since we had bonded by that time. But again,

*Truth destroys
fears when you
understand what
truth actually is.*

DAREN HUBER



sometimes he would get antsy when we'd go home. I did a pretty good job of handling fear. The challenge would be on the three-day trip we were about to take.

Beforehand, I did a lot of praying with the help of the Christian Science practitioner at camp (and my friends and counselors also shared helpful ideas with me). It felt right to do this to protect the upcoming trip. Before the trip started, I prayed for inspiration to carry with me while in the saddle, and I found many ideas that really helped.

Once we were on the trip, we were again on the trail leading to the stream where Remington had bolted before. Whenever negative thoughts came, I would think of what many people had told me: "Error can suggest something, but it can't make it real." I love that!

When we approached the stream, Remington lunged across, but I quickly responded by turning him in a circle. We kept traveling on the trail, and Remington was as docile as he could be. He did

not bolt, crow-hop, lunge, or anything, and for that I was grateful.

In the mornings, all I had to do were some turns with Remington, and he was fine. He obeyed all my cues, and it was a very harmonious trip. He didn't try to bolt with me again, and because of this healing, I am now a more confident rider.

I saw that we were two ideas of God, and that the pure, supreme Mind, which governs all, was communicating to both of us. Over the summer, we performed well in two rodeos, but I don't care as much about that. I care about the fact that I loved Remington so much, and I felt that he loved me back. For many reasons, it was the best summer ever. ●

Julia attends middle school in Kansas and loves playing cello, horseback riding, and writing.

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