



# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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A COLLECTION FOR TEENS

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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
SENTINEL

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# 'I can rely on God for healing'

By ISHITA CHOPRA

I have been attending the Christian Science Sunday School for the last nine years. There I have learned that I can rely on God for healing, and through prayer I have overcome fear in school exams, and have had healings of relationship problems as well as an issue with my eye. I would like to share the healing of my eye, because it gave me more of an understanding of God's healing power.

One morning when I woke up, my eyes were very irritated. Initially I ignored the discomfort, but soon my left eye became swollen, and a boil appeared next to it.

My grandfather, who is not a Christian Scientist, was concerned about the boil. He took me to an eye specialist, who diagnosed an infection in my eye and prescribed some medicine. I had no desire to take the medicine, because of what I had learned in Sunday School about God's constant care for me. So I placed it in a cupboard so my grandfather would not feel offended. I wanted to have a permanent healing by relying on prayer.

My eye was hurting a lot, but I wasn't afraid, because I remembered the healings I'd had in the past. I prayed with this helpful passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "There is no pain in Truth, and no truth in pain; ..." (p. 113). Truth is another name for God, and I knew that since God did not create pain, I could not experience it.

I was grateful that after praying this way, I wasn't in as much pain. But the

swelling and boil were still there, so the next morning I asked a Christian Science practitioner to pray with me. She shared two passages from *Science and Health* that were very helpful. The first was the spiritual definition of *eyes* from the Glossary: "Spiritual discernment,—not material but mental" (p. 586). And the second was: "Be firm in your understanding that the divine Mind governs, and that in Science man reflects God's government. Have no fear that matter can ache, swell, and be inflamed as the result of a law of any kind, when it is self-evident that matter can have no pain nor inflammation" (p. 393).

As I prayed with these passages, I began to understand that there is no law that could cause my eyes to become swollen or inflamed; as God's creation, I am spiritual and subject only to God's laws of good. I also saw more clearly that I permanently include the divine qualities of purity and health.

Within a few days, both the swelling and the boil disappeared, and my eye was back to normal. From this experience, my confidence that all things are possible with God increased, and now I am even more committed to the teachings of Christian Science.

I thank God for this healing. ●

Originally published in the January 7, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# Me? Beautiful?

By KAILY JOHNSON

From the time I was in second grade, I was bullied for my freckles and had a deep hatred of my skin. Other kids called my freckles ugly, and one boy told me that my face made him feel sick. Once I started middle school, the bullying morphed from finger-pointing and laughing to judgment and gossip. I was ashamed because I didn't have a single friend who had as many freckles as I did, and I had never seen a celebrity or media influencer with anything less than clear skin—no freckles.

When I was in sixth grade, I discovered makeup. Foundation and concealer were my favorite products because they completely masked my freckles. My mom had a rule that I wasn't allowed to wear makeup until high school. So each morning after she dropped me off at school, I ran to the bathroom, applied foundation, and went about my school day. When the bell rang at the end of sixth period, I removed the foundation and jumped in the car. Soon, I was completely relying on makeup to feel beautiful, and the more coverage I had, the more comfortable I felt.

A couple of years later, when my mom found out that I had been hiding my freckles, it broke her heart. She explained to me that my worth wasn't based on other people's opinions, and that I could love and appreciate my individuality. I had never thought of being "different" in a positive light, so I was taken aback. She reminded me of what I'd learned in the Christian Science Sunday School: that my identity is not a physical image in a mirror, but truly God's perfect spiritual reflection, because God made each of us in His

image. There is nothing ugly, gross, or despicable about God, because God is completely good. So there couldn't be anything ugly, gross, or despicable about me, because I am the expression of God.

It was hard for me to see myself as a perfect reflection, because whenever I looked in the mirror, I hated what I saw. So I realized I had to make a choice about what I was going to believe. Either my identity was just what I saw on the surface, and could be defined by others' opinions, or my identity was God-based and completely spiritual. If my being was spiritual, then beauty must be included in my identity, because beauty is a quality of God. This beauty is not my hair, my clothes, or my skin. I could also see that beauty doesn't come from molding myself to fit what I thought my peers wanted me to be. Being fake definitely isn't beautiful. My beauty is my God-given individuality and being true to the way God made me.

The summer between eighth and ninth grades, I prayed regularly about beauty and identity. I became more conscious of what I was thinking. For example, if I was scrolling through social media and saw a bunch of models with perfectly clear skin, how was I responding? Was I getting caught up in negative thoughts based on the concept that beauty is a physical characteristic? Or was I being alert to the thoughts coming at me and accepting only the ones that reinforced my understanding and appreciation of my true, God-given beauty?

That summer I also realized how me-focused I'd been when I was so caught up in hating my freckles and trying to hide them. So I tried to shift my focus away

from myself by thinking more about God and about others. I spent a lot of time just being grateful for the love I had in my life, my caring mom, and the opportunities I'd been given—like being able to get a good education. Soon, these thoughts outweighed the self-focused thinking that had dominated for so long, and I began to feel a lot more secure, peaceful, and happy.

The first day of freshman year, I came to school with a makeup-free face. At least one person from each of my classes complimented



my skin, and I made friends that I was able to be unapologetically myself around.

Now it's four years later, and I almost never wear makeup. I embrace my freckles, because they're a symbol of the way I've learned to love my individuality and to be OK with not conforming to other people's opinions. I've discovered that what's really important is learning more about, and being true to, my spiritual identity. After all, since I'm the image of God, why would I want to change that? ●

Originally published in the January 7, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## If you want to stop hating someone

By GRACIE PAUL

**F**or about a year, I really struggled with hatred toward a girl in my grade. I could barely stand to be in the same room with her, let alone talk with her.

I was upset with this girl because of something she had said. And soon, my anger about that made me dislike everything about her, and I became very judgmental toward her. After a while, though, I realized that the hatred was actually taking a toll on me, and that's when I decided that I needed to talk to her.

When I mustered the courage to tell her why I was so upset, the conversation was not a very productive one. A few days later, I went to talk to her again and got so frustrated that I practically yelled

at her. All I could think about was that she was an altogether terrible person.

We kept arguing back and forth, and it seemed like things were still going nowhere. But then she asked me, if I could so quickly assume that she had bad intentions, why couldn't I assume that she had good ones? This shut me up. Why had I so quickly assumed she was a bad person? Why couldn't I see anything good in her? I told her she'd made a good point, and I promised I would try and focus on the good.

Later that day, I asked a friend how I could see the good in someone who was frustrating me. He told me I could love her. This was such a simple idea, but I



knew it was a powerful one, because it's what Christ Jesus did and how he healed. And it's what he taught us to do, too. In the Christian Science Sunday School I'd also learned that loving someone as Jesus taught is so much more than trying to give someone the benefit of the doubt. The love I needed to show toward this girl began with seeing her the way God created her and sees her. Since God is completely good, then her true self-hood as God's child must reflect God's perfection, always worthy of love. She might not appear this way on the surface, but loving her meant letting God show me the truth about her.

Later that night, after I'd prayed about being able to love this girl, I had the idea to go up to her and introduce myself. I walked up to her, stuck out my hand, and said, "Hi. My name is Gracie Paul, and I would like to meet you." The person I wanted to meet was not the girl I had been so frustrated with, but rather, a girl I could know only as God's child. She shook my hand, introduced herself, and told me she would also like to meet me.

In that instant, every bit of hatred and anger I'd been feeling toward this girl completely vanished. The girl who stood in front of me was not the girl I once knew (or *thought* I knew). For the first time, I felt like I was seeing her as purely a child of God. Nothing about what she'd said or done in the past mattered anymore, because my view of her had been transformed.

The next night at church, one of the hymns was No. 270 from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. Part of the second verse reads:

Our God is Mind, the perfect Mind,  
Intelligence divine;  
Shall mortal man ask Him to change  
His infinite design?

It was at this point that I realized where I'd been wrong before. The whole time we'd been at odds, I'd been trying to make this girl change, when the spiritual fact was that God had already made her infinitely perfect. The only thing that had to change was my perception of her.

The next verse begins:

O loving Father, well  
we know  
That words alone  
are vain,  
That those who seek Thy will to do,  
The true communion gain.  
(Frederic W. Root)

When I had sought God's "will to do," which meant seeing this girl as God sees her, I gained a clearer understanding of what her identity truly is. The healing took place when I was willing to see her spiritually—as nothing less than perfect. And I can honestly say that ever since, I've felt only love toward her, and there are no disagreements between us.

Through this experience, I learned that if you are ever at odds with someone, it might just be an opportunity to change your perception of them. For me, this started with really learning how to love. I am so grateful to Christian Science for teaching me how to understand and actually see the true nature of God's children. ●

Originally published in the January 28, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# A peaceful breakup?

By ELENA TREVITHICK

"I don't expect you to return the favor," the note said, "but I just wanted to let you know that I have been watching you for two years, and I think I like you."

I didn't really know the guy who sent me the note, but I jumped at the opportunity to go out with him, thinking that I had finally found my "prince." I felt like he was what I'd been searching for all through high school—some guy who would be everything to me, like I'd always seen in movies. I'd dated other guys in the past, but no one had ever turned out to be that perfect person who totally understood me and who I could lean on 100 percent.

I figured I could get to know him if we went out, and everything started slowly at first. Then our relationship became public, and I even thought I loved him. But as the year went on, I didn't love who he was becoming.

Still, I ignored it, telling myself that he wasn't really like this, or that the things I didn't like were just an act he was putting on.

"He doesn't respect you," my friends told me.

"He's controlling your life."

They even said, "He's kinda creepy."

But I ignored what my friends were saying, too, and refused to think about anything other than the fact that I had finally found my "prince."

As the school year came to a close, he said some things that were really hurtful and some that made me feel uncomfortable. But once again I ignored all that and just hoped we would go our separate

ways for the summer, and we'd be OK when the next school year started.

I didn't have my phone at camp or while I was on a service trip in Peru that summer, so I didn't have to worry about whether I was missing texts from him. But with some distance from the relationship, it was harder to ignore the things that he'd done that weren't right.

*I could see the importance of listening only to God, but I had to start doing it.*

On one of our first nights in Peru, we did a writing activity in which we wrote down something that we were struggling with. I wrote about the problem I was having in my relationship with him. This time, when one of my friends on the trip told me, "You don't deserve this," I woke up a little and actually started to believe it. Later in the week, during my Christian Science Sunday School class, we read a passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that had one particular phrase that really stuck with me. It refers to the value of "turning to no other but the one perfect Mind" for guidance (p. 467).

From attending Sunday School, I knew that the "one perfect Mind" is God, and I realized that I had been doing the exact opposite of what this phrase suggests. Instead of being guided by God and listening to God's thoughts, which are always wise and full of love, I had been turning in every other direction. I had been listening to my own fears, desires, and opinions, as well as to what my boyfriend was saying, and ignoring everything that didn't match up with what I thought I wanted. >

I knew from other experiences that God really is reliable and that I can trust Him. So from that moment on, I knew that I needed to change my approach to the relationship and start listening to “the one perfect Mind” instead of being influenced by my own emotions or what anyone else was telling me.

Admittedly, this was a lot easier to say to myself than to put into action. I could see the importance of listening only to God, but I had to start doing it. So I tried to do it in small ways throughout each day. It wasn’t always easy, but as I continued to hold to this idea through the rest of the summer, I found that I was

able to apply it to other aspects of my life and to feel more confident about hearing God’s guidance.

As the summer came to a close, I heard the calm, clear voice I’d come to recognize as God’s simply say, *You know what to do*. And with that thought from “the one perfect Mind,” I made one of the most peaceful calls of my life and ended our relationship.

Even though I didn’t have a boyfriend to lean on after that, I learned that I can lean on God 100 percent. And I know now that I can always trust God to guide me. ●

Originally published in the February 11, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## I found help in *Science and Health*

By BEN POZNICK

It was getting dark. Deep in the woods, my team was racing to finish a set of wooden structures that we had to build ourselves as part of an intense, four-day camping trip and capture the flag game. The hot, sweaty, dirty work had gone on for hours, and now the clock was ticking. Fifteen minutes left.

I was cutting a log with a bow saw as fast as I could. When the saw was about halfway through the log, it began to stick. So naturally, I started pushing harder and faster. Suddenly, the saw slipped out of the wood and into my hand, cutting it deeply.

*I realized I had the tools I needed to challenge the pain and actually find healing.*

Instantly, I began having negative thoughts. Would I be able to finish the trip? Was I going to let my team down?

After I rinsed off my hand, my counselor and my brother helped me wrap the gash with a bandage. It hurt, but that night I tried to just push through the pain. But the next day as we studied the Christian Science Bible Lesson (found in the *Christian Science Quarterly*), I realized I had the tools I needed to challenge the validity of the pain and actually find healing. As a Christian Scientist, I knew that this was possible because pain, accidents, and

injuries don't come from God. God, good, creates and causes everything real, and that doesn't include anything bad or painful.

I read a really helpful passage from the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, that says: "Have no fear that matter can ache, swell, and be inflamed as the result of a law of any kind, when it is self-evident that matter can have no pain nor inflammation." This helped me to recognize how little authority this injury had over my experience, since my actual identity is spiritual and not subject to pain or any adverse effects.

The next sentence goes on to say, "Your body would suffer no more from tension or wounds than the trunk of a tree which you gash or the electric wire which you stretch, were it not for mortal mind" (p. 393). I found this very relatable, because I'd cut myself with a saw that I was using to cut the trees, and the trees were not experiencing pain. There seems to be a law that says that I'm subject to pain, while a tree isn't. But I knew that wasn't really a law and couldn't have any jurisdiction over me, because the

only real laws are God's laws of safety, harmony, and health.

I continued to pray with these ideas, trying to understand better that God's law is a law of freedom, not suffering. I also talked to the Christian Science practitioner who was there at the camp, and she said she would pray for me, too. The Christian Science nurse at the camp helped make sure the cut was clean and properly bandaged.

Merely a few days later, what had seemed to be a deep wound that was preventing me from using my hand even for simple tasks, had healed almost completely, and I was back to participating in all my activities with no trouble whatsoever. A week and a half after the incident, all that was left was a small, barely noticeable mark right below my thumb. It really had healed perfectly.

I was so grateful for this quick healing, because it allowed me to enjoy the rest of my camp experience that year. It also helped me to understand healing through Christian Science better, and now I feel more equipped to pray about things in the future. ●

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

—Mary Baker Eddy  
*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 424

# When things don't go the way you planned

By LOGAN LANDRY

I've always relied on my own plans and timetables to guide my life. But during my junior year of college, I felt like all my plans were falling apart.

I was applying for many positions during my fall semester, and was convinced that I was going to be a Resident Assistant in a dorm and also get elected to my school's student senate and my house (dorm) board. My spring semester was all planned out, and I was excited! So when none of those things happened, I was devastated. I wasn't even on the waiting list to be an RA!

Growing up attending the Christian Science Sunday School, I learned to handle disappointments by praying for God's direction, though I often struggled to fully trust God. But this time, I didn't even try to pray, because I felt so lost. I was also caught up in trying to find other leadership positions. I knew that just wanting a leadership position for the sake of having one wasn't the right motive, but I wanted one nonetheless.

In the middle of my search, I received an email about an annual student-led conference on campus. I'd never considered applying before, but the international focus of the conference had recently become a passion of mine, so I decided to apply. I also applied for a position on the board of a club that focuses on international work.

Despite these opportunities, I was still struggling with a feeling of ego and the need to know how everything was going to work out. I realized that just getting the outcome I wanted wasn't really going to address those feelings, so I began praying with some passages on the subject of ego from Mary Baker Eddy's writings.

One idea that really helped me was from her *Message to The Mother Church for 1902*: "Scientific Christianity works out the rule of spiritual love; it makes man *active*, it prompts perpetual goodness, for the ego, or I, goes to the Father, whereby man *is Godlike*" (p. 8). I loved the idea that any good I was doing wasn't for me, but was in service to God, who, as my Father-Mother, is the source of all my strengths and spiritual qualities.

I also worked on clarifying my purpose for serving in my school community, and on knowing that I could bring good to any situation I found myself in, whether I was in a leadership role or not. This took humility and trust in God, but slowly I began to feel more peaceful and more convinced that I would be able to bless my community regardless of the outcome of my recent applications.

Soon I was offered both positions, and was also elected to the board of my college's Christian Science organization. As the semester continued, I was

grateful to witness how each position provided experiences that gave me opportunities to grow personally and professionally and to help others. I also observed that the positions I'd wanted but hadn't been offered probably wouldn't have been right for me, and I admired what students serving in those roles were bringing to the jobs. Even the feeling of ego, which had been driving me the semester before, eventually receded as I understood better that all the good I express actually comes from God. So being and doing good isn't about the way it makes me look, but about expressing God's infinite goodness.

Since this experience, I have genuinely been able to "trust in the Lord with all [my] heart; and lean not unto [my] own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). This included my first job after

college when, four weeks prior to the start date, I learned that the funding for my position had been discontinued. Though the situation seemed stressful, I prayed every day to put my full trust in God. I realized I didn't need to plan, but simply listen for God's direction and know that Her goodness is uninterrupted. As I did, a new opportunity quickly fell into place, and I can see now how this new position fits me so much better than the other one would have.

Trusting God and feeling secure in Her direction still isn't always easy for me. But the more I understand that I can never be separated from God's tender care, the more I am able to let go of my own plans and feel confident that only good awaits me. And this opens the way to amazing opportunities, which continue to bless me. ●

Originally published in the February 25, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## Seeing clearly

By EMMI EASTON

I was in the car with my mom, who was driving me to a volleyball tournament, when suddenly I found myself having trouble seeing. There were large black spots in my left eye, and they seemed to grow larger until it became almost impossible to see out of that eye. At first I told myself that whatever was wrong would just go away. But as I closed my eyes, it occurred to me that, actually, I could pray about

*I started to focus on loving everything and everyone I saw around me.*

the issue as I'd learned in the Christian Science Sunday School, because in the past, prayer had helped me with other problems.

I also told my mom what was going on, because I was afraid and wanted her to help me pray. When I told her, she helped me shift my perspective to a more spiritual one by sharing the spiritual definition of *eyes* from the Glossary of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*

by Mary Baker Eddy. While most of us might think of eyes simply as two physical organs, it helped to consider them differently, and I listened as my mom shared the definition: "EYES. Spiritual discernment,—not material but mental.

"Jesus said, thinking of the outward vision, 'Having eyes, see ye not?' ..." (p. 586).

I reasoned that since God is Spirit, and everything He made is spiritual, then my sight is spiritual, too, and I felt a little more confident about my true vision being permanent.

After we prayed with these ideas for a while, I felt less afraid, and the idea of love came to me. I thought of what an early student of Christian Science remembered Mrs. Eddy saying about healing instantaneously: "I will tell you the way to do it. It is to love! Just live love—be it—love, love, love. Do not know anything but Love. Be all love. There is nothing else. That will do the work" (*We Knew Mary Baker Eddy*, Expanded Edition, Vol. I, pp. 296–297). She wasn't just talking about being a really nice and loving person, but about feeling and expressing the love that comes from God, divine Love.

As I thought about this, a warm, fuzzy feeling of love began to flood my thoughts, and despite my discomfort, I forgot about my eye. Instead, I started to focus on loving everything and everyone I saw around me. I began to express gratitude for literally everything that was visible to me. As we drove through the city, I realized how easy it had become for me to love all the people I saw, because this love came from God, and God

created us as His loved sons and daughters—brothers and sisters. I saw loving them as a completely normal thing to do.

Before I knew it, the large black spots in my eye had dissolved completely. When I saw the world around me through my spiritual vision, in the light of divine Love, the healing took place.

I was able to play volleyball really well that day and to have a great tournament. However, this experience was also farther reaching. I'd been having a hard time getting along with a girl on my team who had been rude to me for no apparent reason. It was difficult to play with her when she seemed so hostile.

My mom and I had talked about seeing her in a more loving light—not excusing her behavior, but knowing that she was really the expression of Love, in spite of what her words and actions might suggest. But I hadn't made a lot of progress until my realization about love that morning in the car. When I showed up to my games that same morning, this girl smiled and waved at me (which she'd never done before), expressed joy and teamwork during the tournament, and afterward, was much more friendly toward me. I was so grateful that deeply loving everyone as God's children had had an effect on this situation as well. In fact, later that summer, this girl showed up at the sand volleyball camp I attended and asked me to be her partner. We even became closer friends that summer.

I am so grateful for everything I've learned in Christian Science and for how it helps me to see myself and others spiritually and clearly. ●

Originally published in the March 11, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# Who am I now?

By ASHLEIGH HELMS

From the time I was two years old, gymnastics was my love, my passion, and my life. As soon as I was old enough, for four and a half hours a day, five days a week, I was in the gym: flipping, swinging, and twisting. However, by tenth grade, I didn't feel the same joy about gymnastics that I previously had, because of the huge time commitment and stress.

Gymnastics set me apart from my peers, so it terrified me to think about

losing that as part of my identity. Would I instantly fade into the crowd? After months of a torturous internal tug of war over whether I should continue or quit, I decided that I needed to turn to God for guidance, just as Christian Science Sunday School had been teaching me to do. I felt like I didn't have a clear idea of what I should do, but I knew that through prayer, I would be led in the right direction.

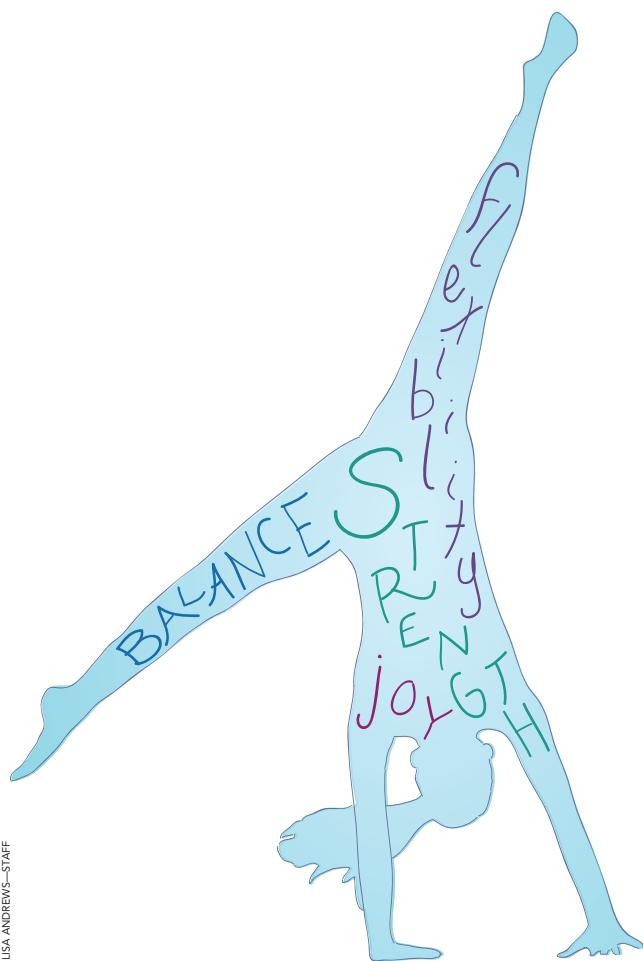
One night, when I was feeling especially dismayed, I flipped open my copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy to get some inspiration for my prayers. In the Preface, I read this passage: "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, today is big with blessings" (p. vii). I had been struggling to see which path would lead to more blessings, but after I read this sentence, it occurred to me that no matter which path God led me down, I would still be blessed. Since God is infinite, there really could be no limitations on the good that was in store for me.

Going to sleep, I felt optimistic. And when I woke up the next morning, I felt clear in my decision to end my gymnastics career. No fluttering stomach. No fear for the future. I knew I was experiencing God's guidance because of the complete harmony and calm that encompassed me.

The next step was to discover who I was beyond gymnastics. This meant getting a new, more spiritual perspective on my identity.

I began my prayers by considering the idea that my identity is God-based, as I'd learned from reading the Bible. First John says, "Now are we the sons of God"

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(3:2)—the children of God. No sport or decision about my life could change that fact about my identity. I realized that as the child of God, I couldn't do anything to remove myself from God's care. Any remaining fear I was feeling dissolved, and a newfound confidence in God took its place.

I also realized that all of the qualities I'd loved expressing as a gymnast were actually spiritual, so I could take them with me into whatever I was doing. Balance as a gymnast meant effortlessly staying on the beam. Expressing balance in other parts of my life now means being precise and intentional in the way I spend my time. Flexibility as a gymnast meant the ability to do the splits. Now, it means working with what I have and being open to change. Gymnastic strength meant climbing the rope. Now, strength means resilience and the willingness to stand up for myself and

the things that are important to me.

I was so grateful to see that because these qualities have their source in God, I can never be without them. And they continue to play a major role in my life as I explore new interests, such as photography and track and field.

Seeing these qualities expressed in new and different ways marked a turning point for me. As I've understood more clearly that my identity isn't based on my activities, but is composed of lasting spiritual qualities, I've found myself growing in maturity and feeling a deeper spiritual understanding of God and the way He created me. I've realized that my identity hasn't changed; what's changed is the way I see myself. Now, instead of attaching my identity to one activity, I lean more on the sustaining infinite to show me all that I am and all that I'm able to do as His child.●

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## 'No one could believe that my hand was fine'

By PRINCESS THOMAS

"What's wrong?" "Are you OK?" "I'm fine," I lied, shaking off the concerns of my friends. But I wasn't fine; I was scared. And my hand was aching as I walked to the nurse's office.

The accident had happened in gym class during the log roll competition. I was at one end of the log, confused as to what to do but playing along as though

I knew what was going on. My hands were on the log as the whistle sounded for "Go!" The next thing I knew, my right hand was trapped under the log, and it felt like it was being crushed.

I panicked. I couldn't speak. Did anyone notice? I just wanted to yell, "STOP!" But no words came out.

Finally, at the finish line, it was over.

I looked at my hand, trying to figure out what to do. My gym teacher excused me to go to the nurse's office.

The nurse wanted me to go to the hospital because my hand looked bad, but instead I called my dad and asked him to come pick me up. As we got in the car, my dad asked me what I wanted to do. We could go to the hospital, he said, or I could call a Christian Science practitioner for healing through prayer.

I thought about it for a second, conflicted. I'd had healings before as I'd prayed on my own or with help from a practitioner, but ... what if my hand was actually broken?

"Practitioner," I told my dad, because I really did want a healing.

As we drove, I prayed for myself by singing Hymn 304 from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. It's by the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, and the last verse says:

So, when day grows dark and cold,  
Tear or triumph harms,  
Lead Thy lambkins to the fold,  
Take them in Thine arms;  
Feed the hungry, heal the heart,  
Till the morning's beam;  
White as wool, ere they depart,  
Shepherd, wash them clean.

This part of the hymn stuck with me, because it reminded me that God is always with me, guiding me through the difficult days just like a shepherd cares for and guards his sheep. I knew that because God fills all space, there really is no place where God is not. I felt comforted, knowing that I am always under His protection.

When I got home, I called a practitioner. I often get good ideas about healing from the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, so the practitioner

and I went through some parts of the book together. We found a passage that says: "Rise in the conscious strength of the spirit of Truth to overthrow the plea of mortal mind, *alias* matter, arrayed against the supremacy of Spirit. Blot out the images of mortal thought and its beliefs in sickness and sin" (pp. 390–391).

To me, this passage was saying that I didn't need to let fear or panic take over, because I had the power of God, Spirit, on my side. I've learned that I am the reflection of God, which means that because God is never hurt, I cannot be hurt. Though my hand appeared to be injured, this was nothing more than an "[image] of mortal thought"—not the true story about me, since, as the reflection of God, I am spiritual. Only Truth, God, was telling me what is true, and I could listen to this and trust it.

The practitioner said she would continue praying for me, and after we hung up, I went to sleep holding on to these thoughts of God. When I woke up the next morning, my hand was a lot better than it had been the day before. Within two days, I was back at school, and no one could believe that my hand was fine and that I didn't even need a bandage.

I'm grateful I chose to call the practitioner so I could experience this healing. And I'm grateful to God for His protection and care. ●

Originally published in the March 25, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## Protected from an assault

By LISA ANDREWS

**I**t was a Saturday night early on in my semester abroad in a European city. I had stayed out very late enjoying the company of new friends. My roommates were doing other things that night, and it didn't hit me until I reached my tram stop that I'd have to walk back to our apartment alone. I quickened my pace along the several dark, empty blocks and stopped in a lighted phone booth outside the apartment building to fish out my keys.

As I fumbled in my purse, my back to the phone booth entrance, a voice behind me suddenly murmured, "Hello."

I turned to find a large man blocking the doorway. I could tell by the way he was looking at me that he wasn't there to be friendly. My stomach sank in fear as I said something about needing to leave. He didn't budge. Instead, he tried to kiss me and reached for the waistband of my jeans. I was able to move backward and block his hands, but I knew I couldn't keep him away for long.

In the next moment, though, my fear was completely replaced by a sense of calm, absolute strength. A clear message filled my thought, almost as though it had been spoken aloud: *This is not your story*. It was an immediate, tangible realization that I wasn't actually alone. God, who I knew to be our ever-present Father-Mother, was right there, keeping me safe.

The man was still inches away from me, but it was almost as if I could see above the situation. Simple instructions came into focus: The next time he reached for me, I would duck and run out under his outstretched arms. He came toward me, and I was able to dive

out of the booth, ending up on the sidewalk. I got up quickly, and when I looked around, the man was gone.

Slightly shaken, but feeling extremely grateful, I let myself into my apartment and got ready for bed. The message I'd received in the phone booth —*This is not your story*—was a helpful guide in how to think about what had just happened. I would not dwell on the frightening moments or explore the "what ifs" of what might have occurred. Instead, I could move forward with the true story: that God, good, is the reliable source of our safety, and no one can ever really be outside of Her care.

It occurred to me that another important aspect of moving forward was seeing that man differently. While his



Czech Republic adventures –  
safe in God's care

PHOTO: LISA ANDREWS—STAFF

actions would label him as a victimizer, my study of Christian Science had taught me that this was not his story, either. Each individual is made in God's image and likeness—the image and likeness of pure good. So, just as God did not create a vulnerable woman, He could not create an abusive man. While what that man had tried to do certainly wasn't right, I felt that I needed to prayerfully place him under God's care, too, and trust that he could wake up to his real identity, free from any violent or impure impulses.

These prayers brought me enough peace to fall asleep that night, and to continue my wonderful semester abroad with complete confidence and freedom. I did make sure to not be out alone late

at night again, but I also brought an increased understanding of God's protecting care to all my activities.

This experience has been an important support for me in the years since, as I've lived in a city, taken public transportation, traveled, and interacted with men, free from any feeling of trauma. It's also given me a way to respond when I hear accounts of harassment or assault: I pray that all women and men can know and feel that "this is not your story." The reality, always, is that our spiritual identities are our real identities—untarnished, protected, loving, and loved—and that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). ●

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## The message that saved my life

By TAINÉ DRY

H ave you ever heard God's voice? As a kid, I had listened to Bible stories about God speaking to people, especially if they were in danger or just needed help. Whatever they heard from God gave them direction and kept them safe. I liked those stories, but I never expected that to happen to me. Then, one sunny Sunday afternoon, it did.

My family and I were going to the Sunday market that opened every four weeks. After church and Sunday School, we planned to grab a bite to eat at the market, then head home. Our church and the market were separated by a busy

four-lane road, and we had to cross all four lanes to get to the shops.

Usually when we crossed the street, my dad would hold my hand and my sister's. But that day I was extra excited to get to the market and wanted to go fast across the road on my own.

"Go," my dad said. So I started running across the road.

But my dad hadn't said, "Go." He'd said, "No." As I was running across the road, I didn't hear my dad screaming for me to stop. I didn't hear the cars rushing behind me. But I did hear a loud, firm voice in my head: "STOP!" >

I stopped, and as I did, a speeding car flew past me just inches from my body. My dad grabbed me from behind and hugged me. I could see the panic and relief in his face, and he could see the shock and confusion in mine.

What was the voice that saved me? God. I know that just like God spoke to people in those Bible stories, God spoke to me on that busy road. And like those people, I heard it in a way that I could understand perfectly and that kept me safe.

I've been in situations where I've been struggling with something, or felt afraid, or been in trouble, and I've had time to sit down and pray. But that day wasn't one of those. There wasn't enough time for a prayer. But I knew from attending the Christian Science Sunday

School that God is always with me and protecting me. And sure enough, He was.

I've also learned that taking time to pray every day can help you hear God's voice guiding you so you can make wise decisions. Listening to God can even steer you away from dangerous situations before you get into them.

This passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy helps me understand how God is always protecting everyone: "Understanding the control which Love held over all, Daniel felt safe in the lions' den, and Paul proved the viper to be harmless" (p. 514). Love is another name for God, and I know that I am perfectly safe in the arms of Love no matter what I'm facing. ●

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## Back on the ice

By FLETCHER BURBEE

The cool breeze was on my face, and I was sweating as I skated hard to get back to my zone. After a long shift, I saw an opportunity to body check an opposing player who was carrying the puck. The second my shoulder made contact with him, I knew something wasn't right. As I skated away, my collarbone hurt with every stride I took.

Because of injury protocol, I had to leave the ice to go to the dressing room and have the team doctor check me out. He told me that my shoulder was out of place and that I'd need to have it examined by another doctor after the game.

Since I wasn't allowed to keep playing, I joined my mum in the spectators' section, and she immediately started to pray for me. As a Christian Scientist, I've had other healings through prayer in the past, and I was grateful for her support.

Mum reminded me of a passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that says: "Mind in every case is the eternal God, good. Sin, disease, and death have no foundations in Truth" (p. 415). It reassured me to realize that this injury had no basis, no foundation, because God, Mind, doesn't know anything but health,



harmony, and safety. And because I am Mind's idea, that is all I can know, too.

After the game, I had to go to the doctor, who said that I had a separated shoulder and it wasn't looking good: three to four months until I'd be able to play hockey again. I was disappointed, but I was also even more motivated to be healed. I wanted to play in our game the following weekend against my hockey club's rival, and I knew that was completely possible, because spiritual healing doesn't take time—it just takes a shift in thought from whatever appears wrong to what Mind is knowing, which is all that's true. I went home holding to the idea that separation, manifested in a shoulder or anywhere else, had no foundation in Truth, and I fell asleep with that thought.

When I woke up the next morning, I began my day by opening my copy of *Science and Health* to page 397, where Mrs. Eddy is talking about how to deal with the effects of an accident. This part stood out to me: "Declare that you are not hurt and understand the reason why, and you will find the ensuing good effects to be in exact proportion to your disbelief in physics, and your fidelity to divine metaphysics, confidence in God as All, which the Scriptures declare Him to be." I prayed by affirming that I was not hurt because Truth, God, was my foundation, and I couldn't be knocked down or shaken off of that. My shoulder

started to improve from the moment I got out of bed.

I went outside, and it was a fairly windy day. At first I was tempted to sit inside and rest my shoulder. But then I thought of the first part of the spiritual definition of *wind* in the Glossary of *Science and Health*: "That which indicates the might of omnipotence and the movements of God's spiritual government, encompassing all things" (p. 597). It was a reminder to me that God's complete control was encompassing me and always had been. So I decided to go for a walk, and it gave me a lot of time to be by myself and pray, which was exactly what I needed.

Just a few days later, I felt so confident about the healing that I decided to go back to the doctor to get my permission-to-play form, which was required by injury protocol. The doctor was shocked and said it was like nothing had ever happened to my shoulder. It was completely healed.

There was practice that night, and I was thrilled to go and to be back on the ice. I didn't have a single moment of pain for the entire practice. The next Saturday we beat our rivals, which was a major bonus, but mostly I was just grateful for how quick and complete my healing was.

This experience was a huge breakthrough for me in my practice of Christian Science. ●

# Are you proud of me yet?

By TIEN LANGLOIS

Being the oldest of seven children had its advantages. I was the first to try many new things, and spent extra hours doing grown-up things with creative grandparents while new babies were being cared for. But it also had its downsides. As more brothers and sisters came into the family, I felt overlooked, even forgotten.

My parents expressed their love for me in wonderful ways, yet somehow, it still didn't seem like enough. I kept making attempts to get their attention and desperately longed for them to tell me that they were proud of me. But even when they reveled in my achievements, there still seemed to be a hole I was trying to fill that had to do with who I was, how I fit in, and whether I was good enough.

I did all kinds of things to turn attention toward me. I got superior grades, excelled in several sports, played musical instruments with perfection, and tried to appear super responsible and deserving of praise. And yet, when I did get praise, it never seemed like enough, and in spite of my achievements, I wasn't really happy. I felt exhausted from trying so hard and frustrated that I could never fill that hole. I knew something needed to change.

I so loved and admired my mom. She seemed so confident, brave, and comfortable with others—in every situation. I wanted to feel that confidence and assurance, too. My mom let me know that these qualities weren't unique to her, but

*There seemed to be a hole I was trying to fill that had to do with who I was, how I fit in, and whether I was good enough.*

came directly from her daily study and living of Christian Science. She'd learned through this study that we each have an ever-present Parent, God, who adores us—and knowing this had changed her life and the way she saw herself and others and enabled her to express these qualities.

I had always attended a Christian Science Sunday School and had learned about God being my Father and Mother—the source and cause of all I truly am, and of all that I always have, including happiness. I had also learned I could pray about whatever was bothering me, and I had experienced many healings of sports injuries and witnessed several other meaningful healings in our family. But I hadn't yet connected with how this related to my identity and sense of worth.

I was soon inspired to talk with my Sunday School teacher about my unsatisfying efforts to get praise. It was such a good talk, and it helped me realize that I had been looking in the wrong direction. I had been looking to others, namely my mom and dad, to notice my good deeds or successes and then tell me that I was good and worthy. But I learned that this approach was always going to leave me feeling that hole and striving toward the next accomplishment.

My teacher encouraged me to start instead from a different standpoint—from the fact that I was God's child, the loved and worthy child of divine Love, and that this was already true, always

had been true. I saw that God had always known me as important, loved, and needed. As it says in the Bible, I was even “the apple of his eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10).

It was like a lightbulb went on for me, and I saw that I didn’t need to be driving hard to please people so they would tell me I was a worthy individual. My worthiness isn’t something to earn; it’s about how God made me and knows me. I saw that instead of pleasing people, I wanted to be serving God, loving God, and participating in activities so that I could express God’s goodness. That was what would fill me up with purpose and happiness. I saw that it was natural for me to feel my Father-Mother’s approval of me as His, Her, sweet daughter—and that is exactly what happened.

From then on, when I participated in sports or music events, took tests,

or climbed mountains, it wasn’t so that others would notice me. It was so I could experience the pure joy of being me and letting Love’s light shine through me. I felt more satisfied and happy, and I stopped looking to others to determine who I was or whether I was good enough. Such a feeling of freedom, acceptance, and love came my way as I let go of a need to try to be noticed and allowed myself to get a palpable sense of God’s constant approval and love.

Today, I can share from my experience that looking for someone to be proud of us really isn’t where we’ll find the satisfaction we’re seeking. What’s really joyful, really satisfying, is to do our best, knowing that it is our nature as God’s sons and daughters to be happy and fulfilled, and that we are always deeply cherished by the One who knows us best. ●

Originally published in the April 22, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## A healing of celiac disease

By KAYA EQUEVILLEY

**W**hen I was only eleven years old, I was told that I had an incurable disease called celiac disease. Celiac disease meant I couldn’t eat bread, pasta, cakes, some soups, and worst of all, candy. It was challenging to go to restaurants with my family or over to a friend’s house. I felt like a burden.

When I got the diagnosis, I wasn’t a Christian Scientist. The following year, my mother married her best friend, who is a Christian Scientist, and I began to

learn more about Christian Science healing. However, it never occurred to me that I could be healed of something doctors called incurable. Finally, though, I was so tired of feeling like I was a burden to everyone because of all the things I couldn’t eat that I decided to turn to the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, for answers.

From reading *Science and Health*, I learned that I am spiritual and perfect,

totally cared for by God. God is good and all-powerful, and there is nothing bad that can challenge God's power or harm me. These ideas helped me feel less afraid.

I was determined to see my spiritual perfection clearly and not allow the fear of some disease to stop me from being happy. When the Super Bowl rolled around that year, I had my first taste of Domino's pizza in two years, and the football team I was rooting for won—two wins in one night. As I enjoyed the evening, I was thinking about the idea that I am God's spiritual, perfect child, so there is nothing in the world that can harm me, not even pizza.

After that, I lived like a normal teen, not allowing fear or any restrictions to control what I ate. However, at one point, the symptoms started to return. I was scared and disappointed. I thought I had worked through this issue, and I hadn't expected to see it resurface.

Around that time, I had an opportunity to go on a trip with other young Christian Scientists. The only condition of my going was that my mom wanted me to talk to a Christian Science practitioner about the issue I was still having with food. I knew my mom just wanted me to be healed. But I was so nervous to call a practitioner, because who wants to talk to a complete stranger over the phone and tell them your problems?

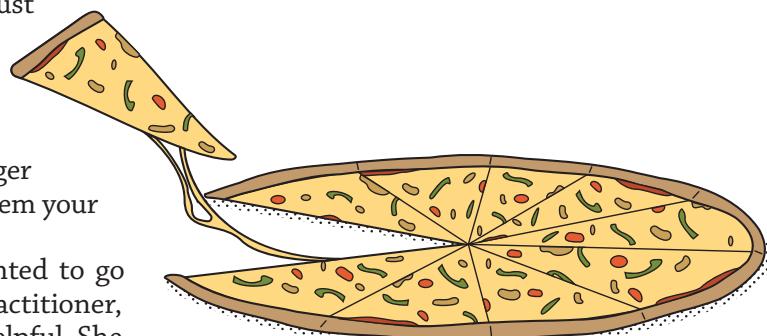
However, I really wanted to go on the trip, so I called a practitioner, and it was actually very helpful. She

began praying for me, and I prayed, too. We focused on knowing what is good and true about me as a child of God. I also began thinking differently about my body. I realized that instead of being made up of a bunch of parts that can become diseased, I am really the expression of God—Spirit, Soul. By getting a clearer idea of what my substance and identity are and understanding that they are spiritual, I was able to see that disease couldn't touch me or have anything to do with me. Once I had this realization,

all of the fear and concerning symptoms began to fade.

I went on the trip with no problem, and since then I've been able to live my life freely, without worrying about what might happen or how certain foods might affect me. I've let go of everything I was told about myself as being vulnerable to an incurable disease, and I continue to grow in my spiritual understanding of my real being in God. Every sign or symptom of celiac has completely disappeared. This healing took place over a year ago.

I am very grateful for God's care and the freedom I've gained through my understanding of Christian Science. ●



Originally published in the May 6, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

USA ANDREWS—STAFF

# The key to forgiveness

By ANNA MATTHYS-PEARCE

One afternoon, my friend and I were hanging out in the pickup area outside my school, waiting for my mom to come get me. Suddenly, I heard a small *clank* on the ground. When I looked down, I saw that a tiny piece of my necklace had apparently just fallen off. I picked it up, and my friend and I tried to put it back on. But while my friend was trying to connect it, the piece slipped from her fingers and fell back onto the ground. Neither of us had any idea where it had landed. There was a patch of grass nearby, and we were both worried that it had fallen there and that it would be impossible to find.

We started looking for the piece, but I have to admit that even though my friend was helping me, I was not thinking the kindest thoughts about her. I felt like blaming her and giving up the search, because how would we ever find it now?

Then I realized that these thoughts were unproductive. Not only was my friend being nice enough to help me, but I'd learned in the Christian Science Sunday School that God is all-knowing

and all-powerful, so there is always an answer. I realized that I didn't need to be afraid of not finding the piece, because God already had everything taken care of.

After this nice thought, I started to reverse those negative thoughts, turn toward God, and forgive my friend. Not just forgiving by saying "I forgive you," but really, truly knowing that we all have one Father-Mother God, one divine Mind, one Love. I was thinking that since this one all-loving, all-knowing Mind was governing everyone, there couldn't be any conflict between us.

Once I got my thoughts back on track and forgave my friend, I felt confident that I was bound to find the piece. And I didn't even have to search! When I looked down, the sun was shining right on it! In just a few minutes, I'd reattached it to my necklace, and it was as good as new.

For me, the key to forgiving was turning away from what was negative and upsetting and recognizing and loving the good about my friend instead. In fact, since this experience, I feel like I've been a lot more aware of the good that everyone naturally reflects from God, good. This has meant that I actually haven't had too many times recently when I've needed to forgive someone, because I already know how good God made them. ●



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# How I got rid of a grudge

By JAKE ERICKSON

I figured the friendship was over. My former friend and I were in a dispute after consistently doing things to humiliate each other as well as talking about each other behind the other person's back. Some of this happened at school, and some of it was over social media.

It seemed we would never talk again; we couldn't stand each other, and we were both angry and hurt. But we went to the same school, so we still had to deal with each other.

I held a grudge against my former friend for a long time. I told myself that I didn't like him and had to be enemies with him. It was hard to forgive him because of my pride. But in the back of my mind, the grudge bothered me because we used to be friends. It took more than a year before I was willing to try to think differently about the situation.

From attending the Christian Science Sunday School, I knew that prayer could help me with any problems, even tough ones. I also knew that forgiveness was something that Jesus put a big emphasis on, so that's where I started my prayers. Jesus taught us to love our enemies, so I knew this was how I should live my life, too. He said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

That's a big demand, but I knew that the reason it was possible is that Jesus also taught that we are all children of God. This means that everyone includes

and can express good qualities, because God is good and made us in His image. If we can't see those qualities because of the way someone is acting, we need to ask God to help us see that individual spiritually, which is what allows those qualities to shine through.

It was hard for me to swallow my pride and see this individual as a child of God, and I struggled so much with the idea that I gave up for a while. Then the first day of school rolled around, and I found out that this person was enrolled in my favorite class. I was having a tough

time coping because I found it difficult to be in the same room with my former friend without thinking negative thoughts. That's when I started praying again.

I decided I would look for something that I could appreciate about him—something good that would point to the fact that he really is a child of God. I realized that every day in class, he worked hard. And hard work is something that I have very high respect for. Every day, as I noticed how hard he worked, I couldn't help but see even more qualities of God that he clearly expressed.

The more I looked for the child of God, the more I saw a child of God in action, expressing Godlike qualities. And I began to see that this was true for both of us—that we were both children of God and always had been. The pride, anger, and hurt that I'd felt were replaced by an appreciation for the good that really characterizes him, and that I also express. >

Soon, we started talking again. We showed more respect for each other, put the bad experience behind us, and got to know each other better. A healing happened in our relationship, and to this day we are still friends.

This experience showed me that even the challenges that seem hard to

overcome, like a grudge, are not so hard when you allow God to transform your thoughts about yourself, the other person, and the situation as a whole. Even the most overwhelming negative feelings become powerless when you learn what God is and the way He made each of His children: good.●

Originally published in the June 3, 2019, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

## Where am I going after graduation?

By KRISTIN MANKER

I didn't want senior year to end. I was living with my closest friends, making great strides in my academics and extracurriculars, and overall having an amazing time. But despite my enthusiasm for all that my last year of college had to offer, I felt a cloud hanging over me that grew heavier as the school year drew to a close: employment.

Unlike many of my peers, I did not feel prepared for life after graduation. I had no interest in going to grad school, and I wasn't making steps toward a career track like the rest of my peers. I didn't even know what my desired career track was! I tried to prolong my job search, but as graduation loomed I was forced to face facts: In a few weeks, I would be unemployed.

Even though the thought of life after school without a specific plan or destination was daunting, I knew I could rely on prayer to give me peace and answers.

*My place was so much grander than any particular role in life.*

I'd learned from attending the Christian Science Sunday School that prayer helps us feel more of God's presence and care, right in the face of challenging circumstances. And I'd also learned that God is divine Love— infinite and all-powerful. So it was natural to trust that a good outcome would follow from my prayers, since feeling more of Love's control in my life had always had practical, healing effects.

I began my prayers by thinking about the idea of place. It might sound funny, but I wasn't looking for my prayers to lead me to a job, per se, but rather, to bring me a feeling of comfort and security. More than anything, I wanted to feel useful. I found a helpful spiritual perspective on place from an article titled "Proving one's right place." In it, the author writes: "Man's problem ... is not to seek his place, for Principle [God] has him perfectly filling it right now."

His problem is not to change the nature of his place from wrong to right. Principle perfectly maintains the absolute rightness of man's place, and has ever done so" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, April 29, 1921).

A new concept of place started to take hold for me as I thought about this. I realized that my place was so much grander than any particular role in life. My gifts, my ideas, my very presence—which are all really the expression of God—are, and always will be, needed.

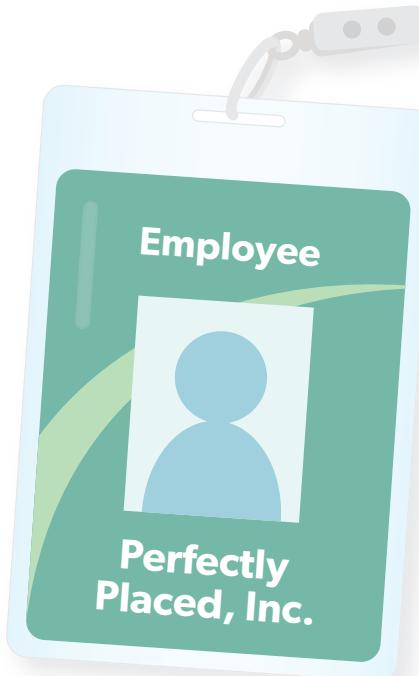
This realization helped me view my job situation in a whole new light. Instead of seeing myself as somehow without a place, I began to acknowledge that I was perfectly filling my role as a student, committee head, friend, and so on. My only job was to focus on the present, giving gratitude daily for the place that was already mine to fulfill.

Graduation came and went, and I was still unemployed. But I knew that I continued to fill a specific niche that only I could. This was a divine fact that no circumstance could take away from me, and this understanding brought me peace.

Then, just a few days after graduating, I became aware of a job opportunity. It was a position I'd heard about a few months before, but at the time, I'd dismissed the idea of applying, worrying that I wasn't a good fit. But now, when I heard the position was still open and needed filling ASAP, I decided to send in my résumé. It felt different than before—as if I were being gently led to the position. Throughout the interview process I maintained that whether this

worked out or not, I was still in my right place and always needed and useful. Later that week I was offered the position, and since then, the job has proven to be everything I needed and more—full of incredible people and God-led lessons.

Early on in my job search, when I thought I was the one who had to find my place, I was working from a basis of fear and stress, and was putting pressure on myself to succeed. However, the beauty of a place maintained by Principle is that nothing can ruin it or take it from you, and it is always good, harmonious, and uniquely yours. It belongs to you now—and always will. ●



LISA ANDREWS-STAFF

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# Turning to prayer first

By EMILY HOLDEN

I was sitting in my room at school, trying to finish a piece of homework, when suddenly my stomach started to hurt. At first I didn't really know what to do. Then I tried changing my position to make it feel better, but nothing was working.

I had seen Christian Science healings before in my family, so I knew that healing through prayer was possible. One time my horse became really unwell, and the vets thought that he should be put down. But after my grandma prayed for him, he improved really quickly and was back to normal in a month. But even though I'd seen this great healing, I had never prayed for myself before.

In the Christian Science Sunday School I had learned many ways I could pray about difficult situations, but I found it hard to consciously think about prayer or how to pray when a problem arose. So in the past, I'd tended to look for physical help rather than spiritual.

However, in Sunday School the week before this, I had been thinking about how I wanted to turn to prayer more and make prayer a bigger part of my life. I'd seen the huge benefits it had brought to other people's lives. Also, I'd recently been to a couple of camps for Christian Scientists in the UK. I was feeling inspired and very uplifted by the discussion groups about prayer and the conversations I'd had with other Christian

Scientists. Other people had shared that they didn't always find it easy to think of prayer as the first solution either, so I'd realized that I wasn't alone. But this also left me with a desire to keep turning to prayer in my own life, and to think of it more as my "go-to" when I was dealing with something difficult.

So when my stomach was still hurting after a few minutes, I made the conscious decision to pray. I started to think about how God is Spirit, so He couldn't have a stomachache. And since God isn't affected by pain, then I couldn't be either, because I am His perfect reflection and expression. Likewise,

God is all-power, and His power is good and is always governing me. So nothing bad could suddenly take over or even touch me.

Because I was thinking about God, I stopped thinking about the pain, and I started to feel calmer. I no longer felt like the stress and discomfort had power over me. My prayers brought such a calmness and stillness that I stopped fixating on my physical state. Around ten minutes later, I realized that the stomachache was completely gone.

This amazing first healing gave me a deeper trust in God and showed me that I have the ability to turn to prayer first. I can't wait to see more of what Christian Science can do in my life. ●

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# 'I had a complete change of attitude'

By IVANDER ORTIZ-GIL

"I hate this trip," said my boat mate as we sailed along the Maine coast. I, too, hated this trip. The scenery may have been beautiful, but salt and water was all I'd been smelling for the past three days. My stomach felt like it was being mixed like a pot of soup, and I was a bit scared.

On this particular day, I had to navigate from one point to the next on our journey, and we had to sail pretty far—maybe six miles. The waves were big, and it was very foggy. Our thirty-foot-long boat seemed so tiny in the churning ocean, and I felt super anxious to get back onto safe, dry land. The water was so choppy and the boat so rocky that all four of us on the boat got seasick.

That night, we picked a terrible spot to anchor our boat—near a bunch of rocks—and the waves were relentless. I got stuck with the first anchor watch for that night, meaning I had to stay up for an extra hour while everyone else went to bed.

However, this turned out to be the night when I had a complete change of attitude about the trip. As I sat there on the deck staring up at the moon and stars, I found them to be beautiful, and I thought of God. I've learned in Christian Science that God is the source of all beauty and goodness. And because God is ever present, I must always be able to experience His goodness if I'm willing to turn my thoughts toward God instead of complaining. I knew that God was with

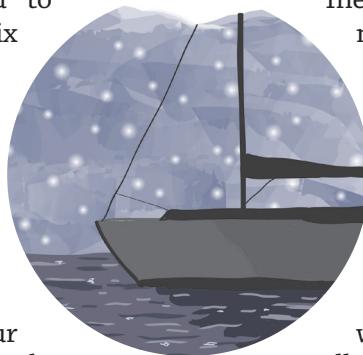
me, even out in the middle of the ocean, where it seemed like we were so far away from safety and comfort.

"You know," I suddenly found myself thinking, "maybe this trip isn't as bad as I'm making it out to be." I realized that instead of wishing I were somewhere else, I could thank God for this learning experience. I could thank God for always being with me, lighting my path.

The brightness of the stars and moon reflected on the water reminded me of this. The Bible says, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). This doesn't mean the kind of light I was seeing on the water, but spiritual light—the inspiration I was getting that was causing all my dark, fearful, ungrateful thoughts to disappear.

As I was thanking God for all the things I was grateful for, I realized that my seasickness had completely vanished. Instead of wishing I could be somewhere else, I felt thankful for this moment of feeling close to God and knew that the rest of the trip could be peaceful and enjoyable. And it was.

This experience reminded me that whenever I'm facing a negative situation, the answer is always to turn my thoughts toward God, who has already supplied me with everything I need. It's by turning to God that I'm able to recognize God's goodness and find healing. ●



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USA ANDREW'S-STAFF

# Immediate healing? It's possible!

By ZAHRA BALDAUF

I've always known that healing through prayer is possible. And as a Christian Scientist, it's felt natural to me to pray about any problems I've faced. But I'd always thought of a healing as something to be patient about, a process that takes a lot of time and effort. It wasn't until last summer that I discovered otherwise.

As part of a counselor-in-training program, we were required to participate in a five-day hiking and canoeing trip. On the last night of the hike before the final descent, I found myself feeling very uncomfortable. I was trying to go to sleep, but my throbbing ankles were a constant reminder that I had rolled my ankles multiple times during the hike that day. As a soccer player, I recognized this feeling all too well, and I also knew this kind of discomfort wasn't going to just go away on its own.

At first, I alternated between trying to get comfortable and sort of ignoring the problem. But after a few hours I realized that if I wanted to make it down the mountain the next day, I needed to pray.

I began by thinking about being preserved—protected—by God. In my family, we've made it a practice to repeat this passage from the Bible together before we go on trips and outings: "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psalms 121:8). I've always liked the idea that no matter what the

situation—even on a long hike—God is always protecting me from any kind of harm.

I thought about the next day, when we would be done with the hike and back at camp, and I'd be seeing my friends. I realized that I was picturing myself in all those scenarios as completely fine. It made me think. If painful ankles weren't part of my vision for myself for the future ... then why did I think they could be part of my present? If I knew the healing was bound to happen eventually, why not now?

With this realization, the pain went away almost immediately, and I was able to sleep through the rest of the night and finish the hike the next day. I had been instantly healed when I understood that I was always fully preserved by God—including *right at that moment*.

I found this healing to be very cool, because it helped me understand that we don't need to wait for healings. God's powerful love is always here to protect us, and we can experience it now. ●

*If I knew the healing  
was bound to  
happen eventually,  
why not now?*

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