



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE Sentinel

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

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information. We look forward to hearing from you!*

Feeling tired?

By NAOMI NUTWELL

Transitioning from middle school to high school was a shock for me. I was not prepared for the larger workload and higher expectations. Every single night I found myself staying up past midnight to finish my homework, and this led to my biggest problem of all: fatigue.

Fatigue was affecting my performance in school, but I felt there wasn't anything I could do about it. I was working hard to get my homework done early, but the load never lightened. I even tried things like listening to classical music while I studied, getting help from teachers, and creating schedules for myself. But I still had to stay up just as late, and I was still so tired.

Since nothing I'd tried was working, I decided to ask my Christian Science Sunday School teachers if they had any ideas. I like that what I learn in Sunday School is practical, and that I can find answers and healing through prayer, even when I can't find them anywhere else.

My teachers suggested that I could pray about the fatigue, and together we looked at the spiritual definition of *man* in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. In Christian Science, *man* is a term that includes everyone, not just men, and is used to explain the real, spiritual nature of each of us. The definition reads, "The compound idea of infinite Spirit; the spiritual image and likeness of God; the full representation of Mind" (p. 591). We talked about how *man*, being "the spiritual image and likeness of God," must reflect all the qualities of God, including strength,

consistency, harmony, and so on. Also, the word *spiritual* was important: Tiredness can't affect something spiritual, so it can't affect me, since I'm spiritual.

Once I got home, I decided to take things further and look up a few other ideas in *Science and Health*. One that stood out to me was, "God never punishes man for doing right, for honest labor, or for deeds of kindness, though they expose him to fatigue, cold, heat, contagion" (p. 384). This helped me understand that since fatigue doesn't come from God, it can't have any power. God has all the power and supports us in whatever we have to do.

Another passage I liked came from a testimony in the chapter "Fruitage" at the end of *Science and Health*: "Through reading the textbook I learned that God has given us strength to do all we have to do, and that it is the things we do not have to do (the envying, strife, emulating, vainglorying, and so on) that leave in their wake fatigue and discord" (p. 683). I found that reading, and finding these passages on my own, really helped solidify what we'd talked about in Sunday School and enabled me to understand how free, strong, and supported I am as God's reflection.

The next week, I really worked on keeping these ideas front and center, and I soon found that as the days turned into weeks, I wasn't feeling tired. I was still working on school assignments just as late, but I'd had a complete healing of the fatigue. Even when I went to bed after midnight, I would still wake up

Tiredness can't affect something spiritual, so it can't affect me, since I'm spiritual.

feeling refreshed—as though I hadn’t stayed up late the previous night. And I found I was performing better in school, too.

Because of this healing, I now know that prayer really can help me break through any limitations in school and in life. ●

Originally published in the January 6, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Healing after a skiing accident

By MCKINSEY BOSMAN

What happened? Where am I? What’s going on?

Not the thoughts I expected to be thinking during a skiing vacation in Wyoming with my friend.

I love skiing and was so excited to get out on the slopes. But the first afternoon, as we were going down an icy, steep run, I got into a pretty bad accident. I hit my head and was unconscious for a bit. When I woke up, there was an intense pain in my wrist and leg, and I felt very afraid and confused. The ski patrol was there, and they were asking me a bunch of questions that I was struggling to answer. Everything seemed very chaotic.

Just then, I looked a few feet down the mountain and saw my friend sitting there, mouthing the words of Hymn 148 from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. This is one of my favorite hymns, and it immediately calmed me down. Much to my surprise, after thinking about this hymn for just a moment, I was able to answer the rest of the ski patrol’s questions with ease.

As they took me to the clinic on a stretcher, I was still in pain, and I got very quiet mentally so I could listen to God. From attending the Christian Science Sunday School, I’ve learned that healing is possible in any situation. And

I’ve also learned that it happens naturally when we listen for God’s reassurances of how safe we always are as His children.

As I listened to God, Hymn 148 came to mind again. I really thought about what the first verse says:

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)

“Nothing changes here” reminded me that I had never been out of God’s care even for a millisecond. So no matter what appeared to have happened, no accident had ever taken place in the spiritual reality of my relation to God as His loved child. Because God, who is Principle, could never falter or change in His care for me, nothing about me could ever change—be broken or hurt. My spiritual existence, which is my only real existence, was intact.

I also prayed with the idea that the fear I was feeling was a storm that God



was calming and would displace entirely. God was surrounding me now, and always had been.

When I got to the clinic, I realized I was completely calm and quite comfortable. I hadn't been in pain the whole ride down the mountain, and I was able to answer any questions in a relaxed way.

A doctor set my arm before I left the mountains, and in spite of the prediction that I would miss most of my soc-

I looked a few feet down the mountain and saw my friend sitting there, mouthing the words of a hymn.

cer season, I was back playing in two weeks. I've also played tennis (using the same wrist) and basketball since this healing, as well as performed in several dance productions. I know my friend's

help and my prayers on the mountain are the reason this healing happened so quickly.

I'm so grateful to have had this experience of the power of Christian Science to bring healing. Since then, Christian Science has been the first

thing I've turned to when something difficult has come up, and taking the time to listen to God has brought so much peace into my life. ●

Originally published in the January 27, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Finding home at college— and beyond

By TESSALI HOGAN

When we face big transitions like going to college, it can seem pretty daunting. I've definitely struggled with changes and had concerns about whether I'll feel at home somewhere new. However, when I started the transition from high school to college, I was comforted by an experience I had when I was little that taught me more about what home really is.

As a child, I had a hard time being away from home and often couldn't sleep anywhere but in my own bed. My family moved several times, and I never took well to the change. Making friends was also difficult for me.

When I was near the end of fourth grade, my family needed to move yet again. We'd only been in our current home for two years, and I dreaded another drastic change.

My parents suggested that we pray about the fear I was feeling, and since prayer had always helped me overcome other challenges I'd faced, I agreed. Together, we prayed with several passages I was familiar with from the Christian Science Sunday School. One was Psalm 23, which I'd learned was about how God guides and loves His children, including me, the way a shepherd watches over and cares for his sheep. The final verse reads, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (verse 6).

*I've been blessed
with a conviction
that wherever I
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lead me, and I can
find the comfort of
home.*

I understood that as one of the divine Shepherd's sheep, I already had a spiritual, eternal home in this "house of the Lord"—which Mary Baker Eddy interprets in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* as the consciousness of Love (see p. 578). I realized that since my true home was not a physical place

but Love's ever-presence, I could never be outside of home, and I could be aware of Love's presence and feel safe in Love no matter where I went.

I also came across a hymn in the *Christian Science Hymnal* that seemed like it was speaking directly to me. It begins, "In heavenly Love abiding,

No change my heart shall fear." I realized that I didn't have to fear the change I was facing, since I was dwelling with God, safe in Love. In fact, nothing was really changing at all, since my true home was spiritual. Joyfully, I read on. The second verse says:

Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
(No. 148, Anna L. Waring)

I felt so comforted by the idea of God, my Shepherd, leading me forward and meeting all my needs.

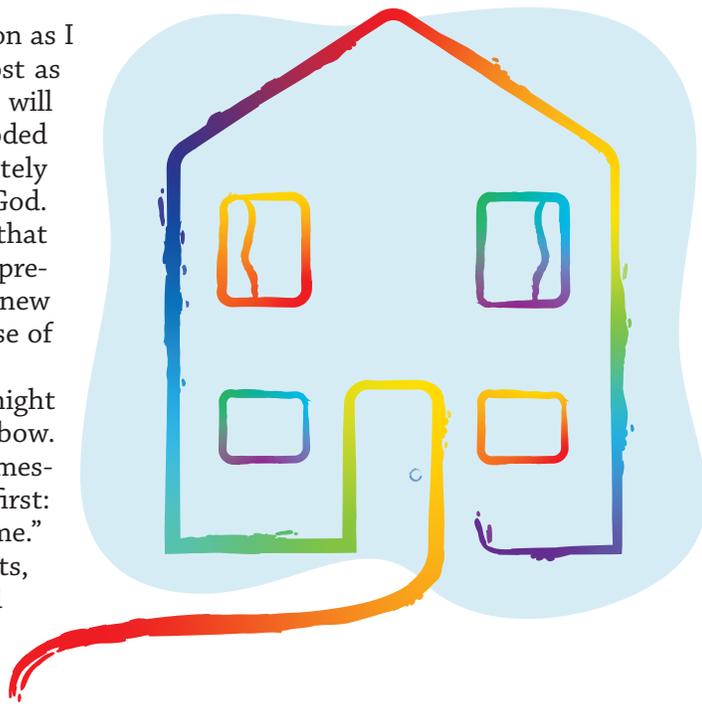
One afternoon soon after this, my mom and I were walking outside when she suddenly stopped and pointed up.

There was a rainbow! As soon as I saw it, an idea hit me almost as if I'd been spoken to: "God will find you a home." I was flooded with peace and felt absolutely certain that I could trust God. It didn't seem coincidental that in the Bible, a rainbow represents God's promise, and I knew God would keep this promise of home.

That summer at overnight camp, I saw another rainbow. This time, I was hit with a message just as strong as the first: "God has found you a home." Excited, I wrote to my parents, asking them what they'd found. It turned out that they'd signed the paperwork for a new home on the exact day I'd seen the rainbow!

When I started my new school in the fall, I ended up meeting people who are my friends to this day. And in that new home and town, I felt more at home than I'd ever felt before—in all aspects of my life. I'd found my place. Home, as I now understood it, truly is spiritual.

Ever since, I've been blessed with a conviction that wherever I need to go, God will lead me, and I can find the com-



LISA ANDREWS—STAFF

fort of home. For example, even when my college application process felt difficult, I was able to fall back on the promise of my Shepherd's guidance.

Indeed, I was led to a school that's just right for me and where I've found a new home. And I was able to transition to college life with very little stress and without fear. I love knowing that God's promise of home is fulfilled for each one of us. ●

Originally published in the February 10, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

"This photo popped up on my phone ..."

By DEBORAH HUEBSCH and TODD HERZER

Q: *This photo popped up on my phone the other day. Of a guy's, you know ... thing. I don't even know him, and I definitely did not want to see that. But now I can't get the image out of my head. Help.*

Todd Herzer: As the father of daughters, unfortunately I know this kind of situation all too well. And I hope you have an adult in your life you can confide in about what you've experienced—even if you don't have any evidence that it happened because it was a Snapchat that's already disappeared. Nothing about a guy doing that is right or OK.

Deborah Huebsch: It's also understandable that it isn't easy to get the image out of your head. I know what that's like, because I had an experience in my twenties of witnessing something disturbing that was hard to shake.

It was a Wednesday night, and I was at a Christian Science testimony meeting at church, when a woman fell down half a flight of stairs, landing on the stone floor below. When she finally came back to church after a month, she was using crutches and moving slowly.

For weeks afterward, I'd had trouble with the image of her fall flashing through my thoughts quite a number of times. It wasn't like I wanted to keep seeing that image, but I also hadn't done a whole lot to try and deal with it—other than to think about how terrible it was.

But this time, when I saw her slowly making her way down the aisle of the church and the picture of the fall flashed again, I said to myself, "No. Not in

church. This doesn't belong here. I don't accept it as true."

What that brief prayer meant to me was that an image of suffering or pain couldn't have any place where God, good, is All—which of course is everywhere, not just in church. No matter how impressive that image seemed to be, I didn't have to accept it as a reality, because God's total goodness excludes anything and everything bad.

I know I wasn't the only one praying during that service, and when church was over, the woman left her crutches in the pew and walked out. She'd been healed. And so had I, because that jarring image never came back to me again.

Todd: That reminds me of Mary Baker Eddy's statement in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* about "dark images of mortal thought, which flee before the light of Truth" (p. 418).

You could say that what popped up on your phone was one of the ultimate examples of "dark images of mortal thought." But you can see from that passage how we don't get left in that place. What does it say those images do? They "flee before the light of Truth." Truth is God, so you could say that no matter what the dark image is—and we all certainly face those dark images in various forms—the answer is always to turn our thoughts to God. The solution is to let God flood our thoughts with light. That's what Deborah did when she prayed: She said no to the darkness and turned toward the light. And light naturally excludes darkness. >

Deborah: That light could come in any number of ways. It could be God's reassurance that you're safe, that you're pure. It could be a feeling of peace. But you'll always know whatever you need to know, because that's what God does for us.

Todd: For me, it's helpful to remember that we aren't powerless or helpless. Even in situations where it seems like we've been the victim, we still have power—or "dominion" as the Bible calls it—over our own thoughts. We have the

authority from God to reject anything that isn't good.

Deborah: That's right. No matter what distressing pictures come to our thought, a firm, "No. Not acceptable, not allowable, because God really is All," is really all that's needed. That kind of prayer packs a punch, because it has God's power behind it. And that divine all-power is enough to rescue us from whatever dark images may pop up on our phones—or in our lives. ●

Originally published in the February 17, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

How can I get people to like me?

NAME WITHHELD

Q: *How can I get people to like me?*

A: At school I was desperate to be liked, and in particular, to be one of the popular kids. The "cool" kids bullied me a lot, so I figured that if I could just be friends with them, the bullying would stop.

I was thrilled when Luke, one of the coolest guys in school, started talking to me online one day. He opened up to me about his life, and he told me that I was pretty and that he had a crush on me. These long online conversations continued, and I didn't mind that Luke wouldn't talk to me in front of his friends at school. I was just excited that someone was showing an interest in me.

One evening, Luke told me that if I would take my top off for him on a vid-

eo call, then he would be my boyfriend and talk to me at school. Although I felt pretty uncomfortable, I liked Luke, and felt that getting a boyfriend and having the cool kids like me far outweighed any negatives. So I upheld my end of the bargain, and then went to school the next day thinking all my problems were solved.

The reality was pretty different. Everyone was laughing at me and giving me weird looks. It turned out that Luke had told my whole class what I'd done. Not only was he not my boyfriend, but he even thought it was funny that I would think he liked me. My plan had completely backfired, and I wished I could hide in a hole and never have to interact with anyone at school again.

I was grateful that it wasn't too long before the drama at school died down and

my peers forgot about the whole thing. But I'm more grateful that this experience was a turning point for me. I started to learn a little more about genuine friendships and how to make them. I knew that a real friend wouldn't ask me to do something I felt uncomfortable with. And I never felt pressured into doing something like that again.

I also realized that getting people to like you is less about being funny or interesting or pretty and more about being approachable and kind and selfless. You may have heard the phrase "What would Jesus do?" It might sound cheesy, but I've found that it can be a pretty good question to ask when it comes to friendships.

People were literally drawn to Jesus; they couldn't help but want to be around him and be near him. It can be helpful to think through some of the qualities Jesus expressed that made him attractive. For example, he was humble, kind, loving, and gentle, and he didn't judge people by their appearance or by their mistakes or weaknesses. Fortunately, these attributes aren't unique to him. I'd learned in the Christian Science Sunday School that because we reflect God and all of His goodness, each of us must also

include, and can express, these qualities. Recognizing this can help us more actively embody love, kindness, compassion, and many other good qualities in our daily lives.

The most reassuring thing I've learned is that whether or not we feel liked at any given moment, each one of us is loved by God. This isn't an intangible type of love; it's actually a very secure, solid feeling of knowing that wherever we go, we're safe, cherished, known, and valued, because God loves His creation. This is a permanently established fact of our being. We don't need to earn it; it just *is*. Jesus knew he was loved by God, and that's what allowed him to do all that he did. The same is true for us.

Now, when I find myself worrying about whether someone will like me, I remember this foundational fact: I am always loved by God. Knowing this helps me become aware of the truly attractive qualities that I reflect and am able to express toward others. I'm grateful to have learned that when we let go of feeling that we need to impress people, our friendships are so much deeper, more genuine, and full of love. ●

The most reassuring thing I've learned is that whether or not we feel liked at any given moment, each one of us is loved by God.

Originally published in the February 24, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

What I'm learning about contagion

By TRINITY THOMAS

It always happened like this: A family member or friend had a cold, and then I had a cold. It seemed almost inevitable.

However, from the time I was little, I had been learning something different in the Christian Science Sunday School. I'd been learning that the thought "They are sick, and now I will be, too," wasn't one I had to go along with. I'd been taught that God is good and all-powerful and takes care of our health. Also, He made us spiritual, which means we're protected from contagion or illness because something spiritual can't be sick.

So I finally decided that enough was enough. I made the commitment to challenge the suggestion that contagion is something I can't do anything about, affirming that God is really in control of my health (and my friends' and family's health).

Around this time I began attending a boarding school and lived in the girls' dormitory. During the fall semester, there was one point when it seemed as if everyone around me was getting sick. As more and more people became unwell, it was harder to just *hope* that I wouldn't get sick. I remembered my commitment and knew I could turn to God for help.

I found this passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy very helpful: "Truth handles the most malignant contagion with perfect assurance" (p. 176). So whenever I saw somebody cough or sneeze, I affirmed with confidence that all of us live, move, and have our being in Truth, which is another name for God (see Acts 17:28). This means there is no room for

anything unlike Truth, such as the suggestion, or lie, of contagion.

I also prayed with the fact that God is the only cause and creator. Since God is good, God couldn't have created sickness and doesn't cause it, since good can't cause evil.

So in reality, sickness can't actually exist or be part of my—or anyone's—experience.

I'm happy to say I did not have so much as a sniffle over the course of that semester, and I know that was because of my prayers. I'm so grateful that I could move beyond just wishing or hoping I wouldn't get sick to feeling assured that God holds each of us in perfect health and that we can demonstrate this in our lives. ●



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

Originally published in the February 24, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

When my friends dumped me

By JENNIFER JOHNSON

Q: *My friend dumped me. I want another best friend, but I'm still mad—and scared of getting hurt again.*

A: When I was in middle school, the popular kids isolated me for a mistake I'd made and then admitted to. This was so hard for many reasons, but the biggest was that they'd been my friends. Also, I'd been honest about my mistake, but others in the group didn't admit the role they'd played. Yet I was the one everyone turned on.

For the rest of the year, I wasn't invited to parties and no one wanted to talk to me. I ate lunch with the school counselor so I didn't have to sit by myself in the cafeteria. I was tortured by thoughts of why my former friends didn't like me enough to forgive me. My friends were my everything, so when they dropped me, it felt like I had nothing.

After that, it seemed easier to pretend I didn't need anyone or anything. I thought I would feel better by *not* feeling, so I put a wall around my heart. And yet, I struggled with this because having friends made me feel

After my friends dropped me, I thought I would feel better by not feeling, so I put a wall around my heart.

good—complete. So when I finally did let someone in, and then they betrayed me or were mean to me, the hurt felt a hundred times worse.

I didn't grow up practicing Christian Science. But after I learned about it, I really tried to pray about being so hurt by friendships. Even as an adult, I still felt bad about these past relationships. However, once I knew that praying in the present could help with things from the past, I began to work on forgiving those friends and letting go of the hurt.

A passage that helped me was something in the Bible that Jesus said: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matthew 7:6, New King James Version).

I'd never really liked this passage because it seemed so violent. Yet it also felt like what I'd experienced: I would give a friend my time and love, and then they'd step all over me. But as I prayed about the spiritual meaning of this passage, as I was learning to do in Christian Science,



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

I had a revelation. I realized that Jesus never mentions hating those who act in a dog-like or pig-like way. He was reminding us to be wise in what we share and to be careful about giving to those who don't appreciate the good we have to give. But even if we do give our pearls and they get trampled, we can walk away without hate or resentment.

After praying this way about many relationships from my teen years, I felt more of God's love for both me and those friends—and the mental replay of those incidents finally stopped.

Sometimes our hearts do suffer hurts that seem unbearable. But I've learned that these moments can actually urge us toward a deeper, more spiritual understanding of what love really is. I've also learned that real love comes from God, divine Love. So if I really want to know how to love, then I need Love to be central. I need to let Love direct my thoughts and actions and show me what my relationships should look like. I can do this by listening in prayer for God's guidance. And I can also let

God show me which friendships really are for me, fearlessly moving away from ones that don't feel productive, healthy, or balanced. Staying close to divine Love means that I don't have to feel a big loss if led to walk away from an unhealthy relationship, because Love is already there filling that space.

I find that I'm happier when I put God first, instead of worrying about other people's opinions or trying to make others happy just to get them to like me. And I also find that when I make

God a priority, my "pearls," or my good thoughts and good qualities, are protected, because I'm letting God guide me in sharing them with others.

Now I know that I don't have to cut myself off from feeling too much, because God has given me enough love to share with everyone and the wisdom to share it in the right way.

I feel so free, knowing that each of us can love without walls around our hearts—and that when we do, we can still feel safe. ●

I don't have to cut myself off from feeling too much, because God has given me enough love to share and the wisdom to share it in the right way.



Originally published in the March 9, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

The power of one spiritual idea

By LILY MAGGIO

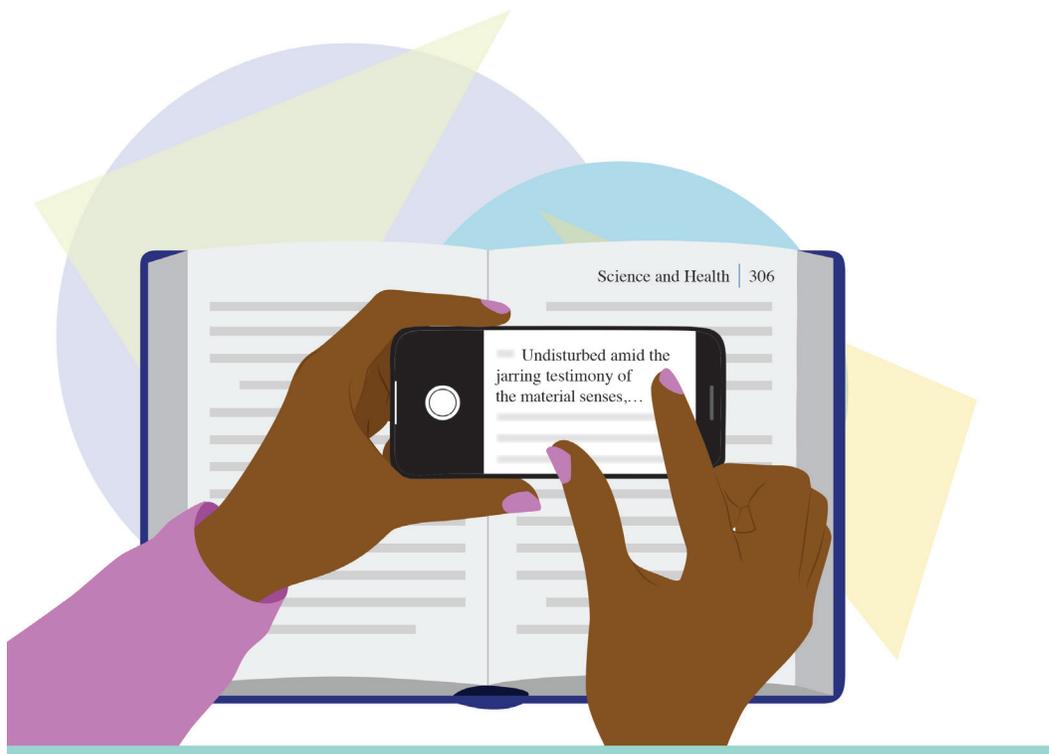
I used to think that in order to have a healing, I had to know everything about Christian Science. But a few years ago, I had an experience that changed all that.

I was at a summer camp for Christian Scientists when I came across a passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that begins, “Undisturbed amid the jarring testimony of the material senses ...” (p. 306). For some reason, that one little phrase really stuck out to me, and I found myself turning to that idea a lot during the week that followed.

“The material senses” refers to the five physical senses—what we use to perceive the physical world around us. So

to me, the passage’s opening words were a reminder that even when we find ourselves in chaotic or challenging circumstances, we can remain unfazed by them simply by understanding that we are actually God’s children, governed by Him and His peace at all times. Often, when we feel overwhelmed by what’s going on around us, it’s natural to think that the only way to find peace is to remove ourselves from the situation. However, I could see from this idea in *Science and Health* that we can remain in the middle of the chaos and not be impressed by it because we’re more aware of God’s presence than we are of all the problems.

During that week at camp, many of my friends asked me for help with



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

whatever was troubling them, and I was surprised to discover that this one simple idea was so applicable to everything. And my friends found it helpful and healing, too.

Then came one very busy day when I had this persistent headache that seemed to follow me around all day. That night it got so bad that I was lying in bed in my cabin quietly crying, with my head pounding, my mind spinning, and my nose all stuffed up from the crying. But right then, in the middle of all these chaotic feelings, I suddenly remembered the idea from *Science and Health* that I'd found so helpful throughout the week. The moment it came back to me, my head relaxed; I took a deep breath—all

*I've learned to zero
in on one spiritual
idea rather than
trying to know it all.*

signs of stuffiness had vanished, and I was completely free from pain. I woke up the next morning refreshed and ready for another great day of camp activities.

It's comforting to know that one spiritual idea can solve so many issues, because I often feel like I don't know enough about God or Christian Science to find success with my prayers. But this healing helped me realize that I don't need to know it all yet; all I need to do is apply what I do already know to any situation.

In my more recent prayers for healing, I've learned to zero in on one spiritual idea rather than trying to know it all. And the power of that idea is always enough to heal me. ●

Originally published in the March 23, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

God expresses in man the infinite idea
forever developing itself, broadening
and rising higher and higher from a
boundless basis.

—Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key
to the Scriptures*, p. 258

From “She’s a bad person” to “She’s my friend”

By AMANDA JENNINGS

She’s a bad person. That’s what I found myself thinking about one girl in my grade partway into my sophomore year of high school.

This girl was someone I’d sort of been friends with in the past, but we never really got close. At first, I just disliked her because of her condescending attitude and the way she made me feel bad about myself whenever we talked. Then one of my friends mentioned disliking her because she was patronizing toward others, and that’s where things really went wrong. As I started to think of her as a bad person—instead of as someone whose behavior I didn’t like—I began finding more and more about her to criticize. I even became critical of little things she did.

As the year progressed, the hatred I felt toward this girl began to affect other things, like my overall attitude and my self-confidence. I became more negative all round, found myself thinking bad thoughts about other people, too, and even started to feel terrible about myself. But not once did I recognize the hatred as the source of all my unhappiness.

One day I was talking to my mom about my frustrations with this girl, and my mom startled me by asking if being critical was a loving thing to do. In all those months of feeling hateful, it had never even occurred to me to try to love this girl instead. And yet, throughout elementary and middle school, love had always been my focus because it’s so central to what Christ Jesus taught and to

Christian Science. Why did that have to change now that I was in high school? It didn’t!

My mom’s question made me think of a passage in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. It’s a spiritual sense of the twenty-third Psalm, and it goes like this:

“[DIVINE LOVE] is my shepherd; I shall not want.

“[LOVE] maketh me to lie down in green pastures: [LOVE] leadeth me beside the still waters.

“[LOVE] restoreth my soul [spiritual sense]: [LOVE] leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for [LOVE] is with me; [LOVE’S] rod and [LOVE’S] staff they comfort me. >



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

“[LOVE] prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: [LOVE] anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [LOVE] for ever” (p. 578).

As I read this, I realized I wasn’t letting Love guide my thoughts or actions. The first line—“[DIVINE LOVE] is my shepherd; I shall not want”—helped me understand how to pray for myself and approach things differently.

I could see that because Love is guiding us and giving us everything we need, I had all the love I needed to be able to love this girl and everyone else. Not to love bad behavior, but to love each individual as they really are: created by Love to be good and loving.

My prayers also uncovered the fact that the root of some of my negative feelings toward others was envy. But I realized that looking for the worst in oth-

ers to make myself feel better actually wasn’t making me better at all. The only real way to feel better about ourselves is to discover our true nature as the sons and daughters of Love and to recognize that good, pure, beautiful nature as also true of everyone else. I began to see that because I’m cared for by divine Love, I didn’t have to be envious of what others had in their lives or feel like I was missing anything—Love gives me everything I need to be satisfied.

Learning to live my life from a place of love rather than hatred and

criticism turned out to be the best thing ever. Not only did I rediscover the joy within me, but I also resolved my shaky relationship with this girl into a new-found friendship.

Loving everyone no matter how they act or appear on the surface isn’t always easy. But committing yourself to love is worth it because not only does it help your relationships, it makes you feel better, too—closer to divine Love. ●

*I had all the love
I needed to be able
to love this girl and
everyone else.*

Originally published in the March 30, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

How I’m praying about school shootings

By PERRIN KENDALL

Another school shooting. I was working on my homework when the notification popped up on my computer. While I was upset, this news was no surprise; these attacks had taken place regularly in the United States through-

out my childhood, and I was almost desensitized to the violence. However, this particular tragedy suddenly became a frightening reality when I learned that some of my classmates had known one of the victims. In the months that fol-

lowed, I started to feel paranoid and powerless, and this fear only escalated when the news broke that there had been yet another school shooting elsewhere in the country.

A few weeks later, I was attending a testimony meeting at my local branch Church of Christ, Scientist, when a woman shared something that really helped me. This woman's dog had been poisoned by a neighbor, and though the woman prayed diligently for the dog for several days, the situation soon seemed hopeless—like the dog was going to pass away.

She sent her young daughter to say goodbye, only to be shocked when, moments later, the girl trotted back happily with the dog—who had been completely healed. When the woman asked her daughter what had happened, the girl explained that she had prayed for the neighbor, not the dog.

While this might seem like an unusual thing to do, it does go along with Jesus' instruction to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you" (Matthew 5:44, New King James Version). Love like this doesn't overlook the perpetrator's actions, but Jesus proved that this kind of love is so powerful that it can help the perpetrator repent and change. And, in the case of the woman at my church, this love was so pure that it also blessed her and her family.

This idea of praying for the perpetrator resonated with me, and I was eager to apply it to my fear of school shootings. Rather than wait helplessly for the next report of violence, I proactively prayed to see potential shooters differently—as truly made in the image and likeness of God, as it says in the Bible. As I've learned in the Christian Science Sunday

School, God is good, so His image and likeness must be good; God is Love, so we are actually all made to express love. I knew that seeing would-be perpetrators this way could help bring out more of their inherent spiritual goodness and love, and override evil impulses.

In the book of Jeremiah I found this passage: "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (24:7). I felt more secure as I realized that we all have an unbreakable relation to God, and that this means we all know and respond to Love. God doesn't see anyone as a would-be shooter; He loves us all as His people, and we can each feel this love in a way that dissolves darkness, hatred, or imbalance. For the first time, I felt compassion for potential perpetrators, and as this new perspective helped me see them through a spiritual lens, my fear lessened, and I no longer felt like a powerless bystander.

But the blessing didn't stop there. I'm also grateful to say that I've since been able to apply these insights to a number of situations, such as praying to love bullies—or anyone who seems to have bad intentions—as God's pure children. And I'm learning more about the power of God's love every day.

I continue to pray to know that God is present to comfort the people affected by school shootings. And I am discovering that praying to know that potential perpetrators are innately drawn to love rather than violence enables me to feel empowered rather than helpless, and that instead of expecting tragedies, I can participate in actively praying to prevent them. ●

Originally published in the April 13, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Help stop the spread of fear

By JENNY SAWYER

At my friend's high school, some students have been wearing surgical masks for weeks. Even the announcement that the masks won't actually protect them hasn't really changed anything.

"People are afraid," my friend told me. "The masks give them a feeling of safety."

It might seem natural to feel afraid when words like *contagion*, *pandemic*, and *quarantine* are floating around. I've even heard people argue that fear can be helpful—motivating us to take action to protect ourselves. But actually, fear can distort our view of what's going on and inhibit our ability to think clearly by inciting panic ... or paralysis. The experts agree, and many have taken to social media to try to calm people's fears with reassurances and facts.

That's why, if you're looking for a way to take action right now, the best thing you can do is to help stop the spread of fear. Where can each of us start? With ourselves.

I learned a lot about the Bible from attending the Christian Science Sunday School, so I've been familiar for a while with the Bible passage that records God as saying, "Do not be afraid—I will save you. I have called you by name—you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1, Good News Translation).

It wasn't until recently, though, that I realized that this passage isn't just a command not to be afraid; it's also a how-to. We don't have to be afraid—in fact, we can actually withdraw, pull back, from any fearful thoughts or feelings that try to rush in—because fear doesn't come from God. And whatever doesn't come from God has no substance or authority.

God doesn't make us afraid; God tells us we're safe, that we're His—supremely loved and cared for. And He guides us to experience that safety-providing love and care. Fear may temporarily overshadow these messages of comfort and safety. But we can disengage from fear by opening our thoughts to God. We can begin by saying no to fear and yes to the stillness that allows us to hear God—and find that the healing, saving ideas that God gives are actually right here with us.

And these messages have power. They're not airy-fairy ideas that sound nice but aren't practical. They're demonstrable. They *heal*. I know because they healed me.

I was with some friends on a ski trip and had a key role to play in the weekend. But the day we left, I'd been around someone who had a cold, and our first night away, I felt cold symptoms of my own coming on.

Was I afraid? Yeah, I really was. I didn't want to miss out on the fun or let everyone down by getting sick. I couldn't seem to shake the fear that I wasn't going to be able to help out the way I'd promised I would.

I've had lots of healings through prayer, so I began praying right away. But after about 15 minutes of doing my best to understand more about God's all-power, I noticed something interesting: My focus was divided. I would pray, but then, out of the corner of my mental "eye," I'd look at the swirling, fearful thoughts of being miserable for the whole weekend, or of disappointing people, to see if they had a little validity after all.

That wasn't going to work! I realized I needed to shut the door completely on

those fearful thoughts so I could open it all the way to God. This wasn't about ignoring something. It was about turning away from the thoughts that were pulling me deeper into an unproductive place of fear, worry, and concern so I could feel God moving me in a constructive, strengthened direction instead. And you know what? The moment I did that, not only did the fear disappear, but I was completely healed.

I was so grateful to be able to have fun and help out that weekend. But the main thing that stuck with me was the realization that every one of us is capable of saying no to fear and yes to God's powerful messages of peace. The mental action I'm talking about is like if you were in a group of friends who were getting really upset about something and you decided to walk away. You can



simply turn to God, turn your back on fear, and “walk away” from those feelings.

And this helps not only us, but everyone. It's like how you can feel the mood of a gloomy room change when someone walks in who's in

good spirits, because all of us contribute to the collective atmosphere of thought. So our own individual decisions not to engage with fear do make a difference in lifting the heavy cloud of fear off of our friends, neighbors, and communities.

We're not alone in this effort. God, divine Love, empowers us to withdraw from feelings of fear so we can all feel more of what's real and healing: Love's ever-present message, “I am the Lord your God ... who saves you” (Isaiah 43:3, GNT). ●

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BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

Because thou hast made the Lord, which
is my refuge, even the most High, thy
habitation; there shall no evil befall thee,
neither shall any plague come nigh thy
dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge
over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

—Psalm 91:9, 10

When you're facing the unknown

By JUDY OLSON

For 16 years, school had been the structure of my life. Now all that was gone. Just out of college and having completed a summer project, I was supposed to be ready to face the future. But I didn't feel ready. Decisions (important ones!)—what to do, where to start, where to go—loomed large. I was afraid of making the wrong choices.

My friends seemed to have it all figured out. But I was overwhelmed—and stressed. The money I'd made during the summer wouldn't last long, and I needed a job. I also needed direction and a feeling of purpose.

Uppermost in my thoughts was a relationship I was in, which either

needed to go forward or end. He was in Massachusetts; I was in the Midwest. I flew in to see him, but by the end of the weekend I still felt conflicted. It was evening, the night before I was supposed to fly out, when I heard the chimes at The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston.

There was an evening church service, and I walked over to attend. I felt at home, now anchored. Tears were streaming down my cheeks when we

sang a hymn by Mary Baker Eddy, which begins, "Shepherd, show me how to go" (*Poems*, p. 14). It was my own from-the-heart prayer.

Back at my hotel and

I was supposed to be ready to face the future. But I didn't feel ready.



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

still praying my heart out, I noticed a Gideon Bible on the desk, open to Psalms. Glancing down, I saw this: “God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved [*overwhelmed*, that said to me]: God shall help her, and that right early [*now*, that said to me]” (46:5). I read it over and over, feeling a rush of comfort and assurance. At that moment it was clear to me that the relationship wasn’t right, and I genuinely felt God would be with me—and him, too—and give me courage, step by step. I was relieved, and slept all night.

The whole way home, I thought about that promise from the Bible, and the divine authority and tenderness behind it. I had a feeling of, *God gave me that message right*

when I needed it! And I knew with more conviction that I could go forward, unafraid of what might happen, by trusting Him to direct and protect me every step of the way. I had a feeling of sureness that going forward wasn’t going to be fumbling along on my own; I was God-supported, God-sustained.

Although I’d been told no one was hiring English majors—me!—the day I got home, a position with a prominent company was posted that exactly fit my skill set. I applied and was hired. It was only ten miles from my dad, and he invited me to live at home so I could save money. Soon after that, a wonderful relationship with my twin brother’s college roommate developed. The following year we were married.

The interesting part of all this was that I didn’t know, or even feel the need to know, what would happen. Yet after that weekend in Boston, all my fear about the future and about making mistakes

was gone. This line from Hymn 169 in the *Christian Science Hymnal* helped me: “I do not ask to see/ The distant scene; one step enough for me” (John Henry Newman).

One step. Amazingly, I was comfortable with that. Instead of being a grind, each day was a new adventure in trusting God. Day by day, my way was pointed out. Never again did I feel like a piece of flotsam and jetsam, floating aimlessly in the ocean. God had anchored me, and I’d begun to learn that my purpose, no matter

what outward form it might take, would always be the same—to glorify God in everything I did.

You might be struggling with your own unknowns right now. And it may seem like there are

many: health, school, finances, even the future in general. But deep down within each of us is God’s law of His allness and goodness. It’s “in the midst of us”—at the core of our being. And this law—sound, solid, certain—is always able to direct, correct, and protect us when acknowledged and appealed to. My experience proved how rock-solid this law of Love is; it’s the nature of divine Love: unceasing, unconditional, invariable, no matter what we’re facing. ●

Instead of being a grind, each day was a new adventure in trusting God.

Originally published in the May 11, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

What to do if you're feeling lonely

By LIZZIE WITNEY

I'm not sure how much more I can take. It had been almost a week since I'd seen anyone, and the isolation was really starting to get to me. Worse, because I work alone from home and my friends live too far away for me to see them on weeknights, this state of things was my "normal." When I'd start to think about the days and months ahead, filled with more hours alone, I was overwhelmed with dread and anxiety.

It felt like a life of isolation was mapped out ahead of me, and I couldn't see a way out. But one day, as I was grappling with these feelings, I had a realization. While all the things that companionship represents—love, joy, union, support—seem to come from people, they really come right from God.

This realization was based on what I'd learned from reading the Bible: that "God

is love" (I John 4:8). From studying Christian Science, I'd also learned that Love, God, is infinite—the source of all real love. So while each of us does express love, this love isn't sourced in us or our friends and family, but in God. Love actually transcends time and space and any other limitations—like whether or not we're with people who care about us.

Knowing that good comes from God and isn't limited to my interactions with others brought me the most relief I'd felt in a long time. I was starting to see some light in what had felt like a very dark situation. It also occurred to me that since God is always present, love, joy, support, and so on must also always be present. These qualities

It felt like a life of isolation was mapped out ahead of me, and I couldn't see a way out.



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

were built into my experience, and so they'd always been with me, and always would be.

I stopped being angry about the situation, which meant that right away I was more receptive to God's love. I also started to feel more peaceful about the long hours I'd be spending alone. The feeling of loneliness eased.

I realized that a tangible expression of the love I was newly perceiving was also right and natural. I didn't have to outline what it would look like. But I could be ready to hear God's guidance, and in the meantime, I also felt confident that I could enjoy each day.

Even though my schedule hadn't changed, over the next few days, I had a renewed feeling of enthusiasm for each day, and I no longer felt so alone. The following weekend, I woke up with the thought that I should go get a cat from a local rescue shelter. The message was super clear—almost as if it would be silly not to go and get one! Misty has been a practical expression of companionship that I hadn't thought would be possible. And loving her has given me a new appreciation for the way our love for others also helps us feel loved and less alone.

Shortly after I adopted Misty, I was also led to get a membership at a different gym. While I'd been mostly alone at my old gym, at the new one I found it easy to make friends.

While I'm so grateful for these tangible expressions of God's love in my life, the thing that's been most meaningful is this new, more rock-solid feeling that Love is always there for me—and for all

of us. And that if we're struggling with feeling lonely or anything else, we really can take our problems to Him. "Cast all your anxiety on him," the Bible says, "because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7, New International Version). God really does care for each one of us, and I've

learned that Love won't leave us without a satisfying solution.

Right now, lots of people the world over are grappling with feelings of isolation, and maybe you are, too. And while we're all looking forward to things returning to normal, it's helpful

to remember that the love and comfort we're yearning to feel don't originate with people. Yes, there are wonderful expressions of companionship—and over the last few weeks we've seen many of these in virtual concerts and dinner parties and in online worship services. But it's cool to know that companionship isn't limited to these or any other activities, because Love really does fill every bit of space and every one of our moments. So even when your friend's phone turns off, or no one's at home, the joy and love that come from God are still there for you—and you can feel them. ●

*It occurred to me
that since God is
always present,
love, joy, and
support must also
always be present.*

Originally published in the May 25, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

When our home was foreclosed on

By CANON CHURCH

I couldn't help crying when my parents told me the news: Our home of 18 years had been foreclosed on. It was a shock. Plus, I had been living in that house for my whole life, so it was hard to think about letting it all go.

We didn't know where we would go or what we would do. The only thing we pretty much knew for sure was that we'd be moving somewhere out of state, because most places in California are very expensive.

It wasn't until a few weeks later that my mom suggested moving to the Midwest, where she'd gone to high school. My younger sister and I were a bit skeptical because it was so far away from everything we'd ever known. But in the end, there wasn't a better option.

I was terrified. I couldn't imagine anything besides California and the house we'd been living in. I also wasn't looking forward to the drive, which was going to be over twenty hours long.

Many grueling hours on the road later, we arrived at our new home. Everyone in my family seemed happy about starting a new life. Everyone except me.

I was upset and feeling very negative—completely unwilling to accept anything new. I felt like the Midwest was a totally different world, and like there wasn't anything good here for me. For the few remaining days of the summer, I was in a bad state of depression. I didn't want to go anywhere with my family and just moped around at home.

While it might seem like my situation was pretty bad, looking back, I can see that there was actually a lot of good coming into my life at that time; I just wasn't willing to accept it. But something changed for me when I came across a passage from a book

I've always relied on: *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. This book had helped me in the past when I'd needed healing or a change in perspective. And it was just as helpful this time. The passage I read was in the final chapter of the book, "Fruitage," in which people share how they were healed just by reading *Science and Health*. One testifier wrote: "Life was being lived from a new basis, the old things of personal sense were passing away and all things becoming new." Then he linked this change to what he was learning about God: "I learned that the infinite good is the one Friend upon whom we can call at all times, an all-powerful, ever-present help in every time of trouble;..." (p. 695).

I realized that since God is infinite good, all the good God is giving me could never be limited to one particular home

I realized that since God is infinite good, all the good God is giving me could never be limited to one particular home or place.



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

or place; it has to be everywhere. So I just needed to open my eyes to it and accept it. My “new basis” wasn’t about trying to get something that didn’t seem to exist for me—like a feeling of happiness, peace, or comfort—but about simply seeing what was already there for me and everyone because of God’s unlimited goodness for us all.

Well, guess what? Not only did I find so much love and friendship at my new school, but I also found so much to love about my new home. And I felt more

trust that truly there’s nowhere I can go where God won’t be guiding me and where His love and goodness won’t be there for me.

It’s now been four years since we moved, and I can genuinely say that ever since this change in thought, I have been happy and haven’t looked back. I’ve learned that accepting change does require us to grow spiritually. But this is a good thing, because it helps us trust God more as our reliable and forever-present source of goodness. ●

Originally published in the June 8, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

On the day of the big race

By HARRISON OSTENBERG

My favorite sport is track. That’s why when I made it to the state competition for track as a freshman, I felt very accomplished.

But then something terrible happened. The week before state, my coach warned me that I should be really careful, so that I wouldn’t get hurt before the big race. And that same week, I managed to hurt my ankle pretty badly when I was practicing football for fun.

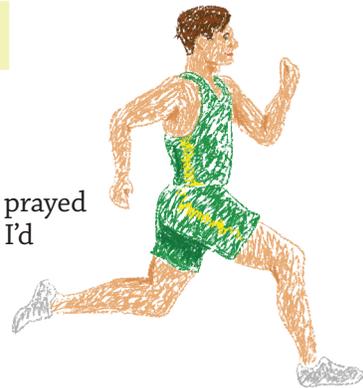
There I was on crutches, stressed out, knowing that in a few days I was supposed to be performing my best. At track practice, I saw the disappointment on my coach’s face when I told him what had happened.

Fast forward to the day of state. Even walking to breakfast, I couldn’t help but limp because of the pain. But that day, instead of worrying, I tried something else—something I should have done in

the first place. I prayed for myself the way I’d learned to in the Christian Science Sunday School.

I realized there were two ways I could look at things. One way was in line with what the five physical senses were telling me: that I was a runner who was damaged. That’s how I’d been seeing myself for the last several days, and it really hadn’t helped anything.

Then I thought about the other way I could see the situation: by beginning with God. God is Spirit. So I realized that instead of seeing myself as a runner with a physical body that might or might not perform well, I could see myself as Spirit’s image and likeness—spiritual and free. Prayer helped change my mindset to recognize the real runner that



BETH GRIFFIN—STAFF

I am: God's expression. And my focus shifted from being worried to trusting God more and more.

I decided I would only identify myself correctly—the way God made me, as His spiritual reflection. I would not identify myself as someone with a hurt ankle. That day I knew that all the power and strength I need as an athlete comes from God. God creates and maintains my identity and always will. I stuck with that idea all day. I thought of it an hour before my race. Ten minutes before. Five minutes, four, three, two, one.

And then I was standing on the track, watching my fellow relay team member coming up fast behind me. As he handed

me the baton, I knew what I truly was and why I was free to perform. I felt no pain at all while I was running, and that day our relay team ended up setting a new

personal record. In fact, because we were faster than we'd ever been before, we moved on to the next round, and I was able to run painlessly in that race, too.

Of course it was exciting to perform well, individually and as a team.

But I walked away with more than just a team record to be grateful for. This experience also taught me that seeing things from God's perspective is the quickest way to get "on track" for healing. ●

I decided I would only identify myself correctly—the way God made me, as His spiritual reflection.

Originally published in the June 22, 2020, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

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