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

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Safe in the rainforest

by SAPHIRE JOHNSTON

Last summer I went on a service trip to Costa Rica with my National Leadership Council class. The NLC is a multi-year leadership program, run by DiscoveryBound, for young students of Christian Science. (NLC is dedicated to fostering spiritual growth, leadership qualities, and a service approach to life.) We traveled to the village of Sarapiquí, to perform service projects that would help the children build friendships and have productive activities to get involved in, such as community sports.

One afternoon, after a morning of participating in service project work, our group went to a natural waterfall, Fortuna Falls (“fortune” in Spanish), in the middle of a dense tropical rainforest. Several days before, our group had been taught about poisonous snakes while on nature walks through the rainforest. We had been told that if you leave the snakes alone, they usually wouldn’t bother you.

While my friends were playing in the crisp, beautiful waters at the base of the waterfall, I was on the shore writing about our efforts to help the

people in Sarapiquí. I was writing to keep track of all my activities during the trip. I wrote about the service project we worked on that morning and several similar activities from earlier in the week.

Suddenly, I heard my friends start screaming from across the way. My friends looked terrified and began pointing to where I was sitting. At first I didn’t know what they were sounding the alarm about, but later I found out it was a poisonous snake close to me.

Right away, I started praying with this idea from the Bible: “Fear not: for I am with thee” (Isaiah 43:5). Knowing that God was keeping me safe helped me calm down and see the reality of the situation. I knew that I was safe because God was in control of any and all circumstances, which included this one. Soon our guide came over to where I was seated and told me to move over a bit so he could take care of a snake. As I moved, the guide removed it from some rocks near me.

I was inspired by a verse from the *Christian Science Hymnal*: “Let not fearful thoughts employ” (Thomas Hastings, adapted, Hymn 97). This meant to me that I could be calm, collected, and fearless when faced with a difficult situation. I became peaceful because I knew that God was right there comforting and protecting me.

After the guide removed the snake, I told my friends that I was fine and expressed my gratitude to God silently as they went back to their activities. The rest of the trip, while not without oth-

I became peaceful because I knew that God was right there.



COURTESY PHOTO

Sapphire after painting water meter covers in San Ramón, Costa Rica.

er challenges, was joyful. Through this experience, I was able to conquer fear when facing situations later on, such as when we were camping and a rat snuck into my tent. In that startling moment, I was able to still my tent-mate's fears by telling her that God was right there loving us and assuring both of us that we were safe in God's arms. The rat ran out, leaving us alone. And we had no more surprising meetings with creatures from then on.

This experience showed me that the kingdom of heaven or "the actual reign of harmony on earth" (Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 122) is right here within us. We only need to turn away from what is presented to us through our eyes and see that we are safe in God. ●

Sapphire Johnston is a junior in high school. She loves singing in choir and riding her bike everywhere.

Originally published in the January 14 & 21, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Make the right call: Reject anger

by BRITTANY DUKE

This past summer I was really excited about a basketball tournament against one of the best teams in our league. On the way to the gym, my dad and I said a "met" together in the car. The word *met* is short for a "metaphysical" idea. At the summer camp for Christian Scientists I attend, before every activity we start with a good idea, usually from Mary Baker Eddy's writings, the Bible, or the *Christian Science Hymnal*.

Our "met" before the basketball game went along the lines of a quote from Mary Baker Eddy's *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*: "Never ask for tomorrow: it is enough that divine Love is an ever-present help; and if you wait, never doubting, you will have all you need every moment" (p. 307).

Being angry at someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to be harmed.

I really liked the part where it says "you will have all you need every moment." To me that meant that God was right there on the court and I was expressing God through spiritual qualities. I was grateful that the girls on the other team were good players, because they challenged our team to try harder and become better.

During the game, toward the end of the first quarter, a girl went to make a basket and she hit my mouth with her elbow. The referee stopped the game. Although my mouth hurt, I didn't think it was a big deal until the ref called my coach onto the court and my teammates came up and asked me if I was OK.

As it turned out, the girl had hit my front teeth and they were drastically bent

back. My lip had been punctured by my braces and my mouth was bleeding, so my coach handed me a towel to stop the bleeding. Then I headed to the bathroom to clean up. My mom met me there immediately and shared with me that I had “never been more perfect” than I was right then. This meant to me that God made and maintains me perfectly. But as soon as I looked in the mirror and saw my teeth, I freaked out and was really mad at the girl who had elbowed me in the mouth. It took a while to calm down, and then I started thinking about Hymn No. 267 in the *Hymnal*, which goes,

Our God is All-in-all,
His children cannot fear;
See baseless evil fall,
And know that God is here.
(Emily F. Seal)

This verse really helped me, because if a building or a house doesn't have a strong base or foundation, there is no way it can stand. Since the picture of injury in the mirror was “baseless evil” I could take a stand and say “no,” this doesn't represent my true spiritual identity or anyone else's. I know that everything God makes is good, so the picture I was seeing in the mirror had to be false if it wasn't showing me my true unblemished perfection.

After I prayed with this idea, I went back into the gym and was able to finish watching the game.

But seeing the girl who hit me was making me upset, especially since she was playing really well. A lot of not-so-kind feelings were surfacing. Just then a thought came to me from one of my Sunday School teachers. We'd talked about how when you're mad at someone and holding on to anger, you are hurting only yourself. Being angry at someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to be harmed.

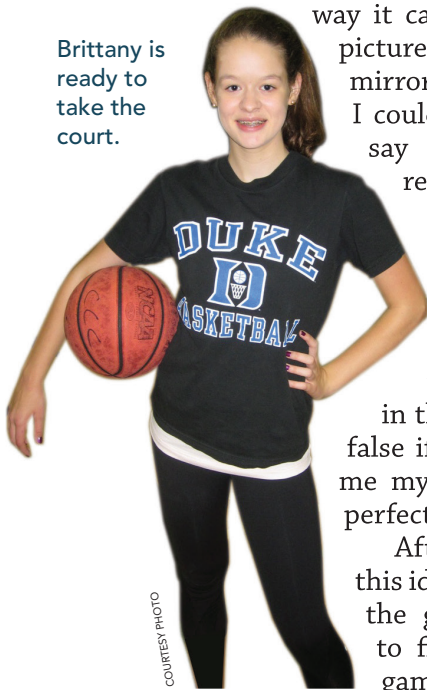
When I started appreciating that this girl was a child of God, I was able to let go of my anger toward her. As soon as the game was over she came up and apologized for hitting me with her elbow and asked me if I was OK. I told her that I was fine and that I wasn't mad at her. I knew it wasn't intentional. At first it surprised me that I said this, but then I realized it was true. Although the physical picture looked bad, I knew that God made and maintains me perfectly. I was able to let go of all my anger.

The next day, I went to the orthodontist to see if he could fix my braces. The first thing he said after seeing my teeth was that I was really lucky I had a big wire in to keep my teeth secured in my mouth. After he took out the old wire and put in a new smaller wire, my teeth began to adjust immediately until they looked exactly the same as they did before. I told my dad about this and about how lucky I was that I had braces so my teeth didn't come out. He said that even if I didn't have braces, God would have shown me protection and perfect healing in some other way.

What my dad said immediately hit home, because God is much more powerful than a piece of wire. I started wearing a mouth guard during basketball, but I know God is always my real protection. ●

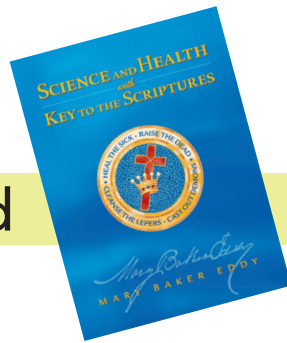
Brittany Duke is in ninth grade. She lives in Missouri and loves to play basketball, volleyball, tennis, and spend time with friends.

Brittany is ready to take the court.



Originally published in the January 28, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

I really want to read



but ...

Ask your questions. We'll print some answers. Tom McElroy, a Christian Science practitioner from Boston, Massachusetts, and Ginny Luedeman, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher from Salem, Oregon, share their responses to this question from a teen.

Q: I really want to read *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. I know I could learn so much from it, but each time I've tried, I haven't been able to get past the first chapter. What can I do?

A: I think you can consider that very desire within you to read the book a calling, a way of knowing there's good there for you. It's divine Love's way of saying, "I have something here for you," and that you're right not to let anything stand in your way from engaging with that message.

What's been helpful to me at times is to ask myself in a really honest way why I want to read the book. What am I looking for? What questions do I have? What do I need? What do I want to learn?

I think going to the book with personal questions, with a yearning for something that's meaningful to us—not just what other people say we can or should get out of it—can be really helpful. Then, instead of it feeling like we're trying to figure out and do something with *Science and Health*, the book becomes a resource that speaks to us, that is doing something with

us. We get to be the recipient of the living inspiration we come in contact with in the book. It's not a passive relationship, it's an active one, where we go with questions—a bit like you'd go talk to a mentor—and the book speaks to us, teaches us, and helps us. It feels alive and engaging, and really real and personal.

I also often find it helpful to let go of all expectations and just read. Not to try to make something inspiring, but just to read until something jumps off the page in a way that I didn't make happen. I don't get stuck that way. I just keep cruising along, like on a road trip, until some spiritual view makes me stop and go, "Wow!"

Tom McElroy

A: I know what you mean about finding it hard to get past the first chapter. Some days, I only make it through the first page!

Sometimes one sentence or idea will just stand out and I will think about it for days.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, the book written by Mary Baker Eddy, is amazing and so deep. It's so full of thought-provoking ideas—ideas like, "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings" (p. vii).

Wow, what a thought: that there's an "Infinite" to lean on. And that's only the first sentence!

Reading *Science and Health* can be a wonderful healing and enlightening experience. At times I love to read different chapters out of order. The "Fruitage" chapter in the back of the book is really powerful. I sometimes find inspiration in reading that chapter first, and then I might

feel moved to understand how the healings described there happened, so I want to explore other chapters like “Prayer” or “Christian Science Practice.”

One time my husband decided to read *Science and Health* in a day. I couldn’t believe that he could do it, but we were on a ski trip and he had a full day of uninterrupted time so he got up at 4:00 a.m. and read all day, only stopping for short breaks. Before midnight he finished the entire book! When I asked him how he felt about doing that, his answer cracked me up: He said all he got out of it was “tired eyes.” He decided that his motive wasn’t really a good one, since the book isn’t a novel but is to be pondered and thought about more deeply. We had a good laugh over his experiment, and it was a lesson to me to read *Science and Health* with an

open thought and heart, without worrying about just getting through it.

When I really ponder *Science and Health*, sometimes I have to quit reading because one sentence or idea will just stand out and I will think about it for days. I find that satisfying. And some passages in *Science and Health* have been comforting during those times when I feel there is so much more I need to understand in the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy’s writings. One is on page 485: “Emerge gently from matter into Spirit. Think not to thwart the spiritual ultimate of all things, but come naturally into Spirit through better health and morals and as the result of spiritual growth.”

Enjoy the journey!

Ginny Luedeman

Originally published in the February 11, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Choose love instead of hate

by CLAIRE VAN FOSSEN

The night of December 20, 2012, I was reading a book for a school assignment. It addressed human trafficking and slavery issues in America today. As I read, the book became increasingly disturbing. Finally it brought me to tears, and I shut it angrily, wishing that all the people who had done horrific things could be removed from this world forever.

As my thought was foggy with storm clouds of fear and hate, thoughts of the elementary school shooting that had occurred one week prior in Newtown, Con-

necticut, also poured in. I began to feel even more afraid and hopeless, wondering how God could have “let” people do terrible things to each other. If God is good, I thought, then why is evil so rampant in our society? I knew there had to be a solution to my questions, but I wasn’t sure what it would take for me and for society to forgive the kind of people who commit horrific acts.

I looked over at my bedside table and saw the *Christian Science Hymnal* and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. I remembered read-

*Fear and hatred
only close our
thoughts to God
when we most need
to hear Him.*

ing countless healings from people who had read from these two books and immediately felt comfort. For once, I felt as if I wanted to pick them up and read them, not because I was obligated to, but because I needed to hear the “still small voice” of God through the storm (see I Kings 19:12). I exchanged the book on slavery I was reading for the *Hymnal* and randomly opened to Hymn 148. The verse that stood out to me was:

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)

Immediately, my mind was calmer. I was not going to be caught up in the storm. It could “roar without me.” I realized my inner peace and society’s inner peace were protected by God, divine Love, “... yesterday, and to-day, and forever” (see *Science and Health*, p. 2).

I felt surrounded by God’s loving embrace. But I was still seeking a solution for this question: How could I live happily while vicious people looked to hurt others?

I picked up my *Science and Health* and started on page 1. As I began to read, the same encompassing love filled my heart. This favorite line stood out to me: “Desire is prayer; and no loss can occur from trusting God with our desires, that they may be moulded and exalted before they take form in words and in deeds.” Right away I knew my desire to feel peace and to find a solution would be greeted with a wholesome and healing answer. I continued to read, my heart reaching out to God, when I stumbled across another passage: “God is Love. Can we ask Him to be

more? God is intelligence. Can we inform the infinite Mind of anything He does not already comprehend? Do we expect to change perfection?” (p. 2).

Right then, an answer came to me. I realized I had wanted to change criminals into more loving and considerate human beings. But how is that possible when God’s love is already infinite and His work is already complete? The solution was not to change the image and likeness of God (see Genesis 1:26), but to see that evil tries to manipulate people into doing things that are unnatural to their true spiritual nature. I needed to guard against hate and anger in my own thoughts, and to forgive.

Expressing infinite intelligence and love by forgiving sin, just as Jesus did, I realized, is the answer to a more wholesome and peaceful society. This can’t be accomplished by merely tossing around the words “I forgive you.” No, we must truly desire to see everyone as God’s child and reflection. Then, awareness of spiritual identity will replace the mask of evil. As this realization dawned on me, all the fear and hatred I’d been feeling melted away. The “still small voice” of God had broken through the storm, and I began to feel a sense of forgiveness, not only in relation to world issues, but also for the people in my life who had hurt me or had been inconsiderate of my needs. Love for God’s creation took the fear away and I went to sleep peacefully.

Although it is often challenging to forgive friends or family, let alone criminals, it’s OK for us to take up the challenge and consider it a “work in progress.” I have learned that fear and hatred only close our thoughts to God when we most need to hear Him. We can start consciously choosing to love rather than to hate. ●

Claire is a sophomore in high school in Wisconsin. She loves dance, choir, and participating in DiscoveryBound’s National Leadership Council (NLC).



Originally published in the February 25, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Courtside prayer

by JEFFREY LEWIS

One Sunday several months ago, I was having a great time expressing God while playing basketball. I was thinking about reflecting Him as Spirit, through qualities like strength, speed, and joy. My team was playing a good game, and I was running up and down the court just being glad for the chance to play.

Toward the end of the game, one of my teammates stole the ball at one end of the floor. I ran up with him on the fast break and got past my defender. My teammate passed the ball to me. I leaped up to grab the ball, but when I came down I landed on my knee awkwardly. I felt a sharp pain and fell down. I got up almost immediately and forced myself to hop to the bench. My coach and teammates asked me if I was OK, and I told them I just needed to rest for a little bit.

At first, I tried to simply shrug it off and ignore what had happened. I continued to root and cheer for my teammates. However, the pain only grew worse. Soon I realized that simply ignoring it was not the right thing to do.

I looked to prayer, as I'm used to doing as a Christian Scientist. I knew that a picture of injury wasn't the real story, and that I could be healed. As I sat on the bench and prayed, my thoughts turned to my motives. Playing basketball was a right activity—I'd been enjoying healthy competition, and expressing divine qualities like strength and skill. Was it right, then, that these good motives could be punished? Or that an erroneous picture

of injury could ruin my experience? No.

As I continued praying, I saw that error had no power to interrupt my expression of God, nor did it have any power to cause me injury. In Christian Science we learn to not give reality or power to error. Yet at the same time, it is very important not to ignore error in our thinking, but to address it head on. So I affirmed that I couldn't be taken out of God's care, and that I continued to reflect Him as the complete expression of Life and Love. The pain disappeared as I prayed.

At the end of the game, I was able to stand up and shake hands with the other team. Because of the prayerful work that I had done, I was also able to walk from the gym to the car without discomfort. And by the next day, my knee was causing me no more pain at all. I walked gently for the next few days, but by the time Sunday rolled around again, I was able to start the game.

I played with even more delight, knowing that nothing could interrupt the joy and happiness that I feel from playing basketball. ●

Jeff Lewis is a junior in high school. In his free time he enjoys photography, mountain biking, playing ultimate frisbee, singing in choir, and playing the trumpet in his school's jazz band.

I knew that a picture of injury wasn't the real story, and that I could be healed.



COURTESY PHOTO

Originally published in the March 11, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

'I willingly listened'

by CONRAD HEATH

Listening to God can sometimes seem difficult. There are things everywhere in our life that try to distract us from God's voice, be it wrong motives, unloving thoughts, or simply thinking that we don't need God and that we can figure out life all on our own.

But God's plan is always harmonious. So when we are listening, we see this harmony in action. Protection is included in harmony. God is always protecting us, and we don't need to be afraid that we aren't being protected. Mary Baker Eddy refers to "the protection of the Most High" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 436), and I'm learning this "Most High," God, has all power.

Throughout my life, I've had many experiences of God's protection. One of them was while I was riding a bike. I live at the top of a steep driveway, and often ride down and then out into the street. On one particular day, a spiritual intuition told me to slow down even though I didn't hear or see anything coming my way. I willingly listened to this message and slowed down. Just as I was reaching the end, where the main road starts, a car came around a blind corner. This was the first time that had ever happened, and had I not been listening, I could have been in the car's path. So I'm grateful for two things. First, that I listened, and second, that I did what God, divine Mind,

directed. This experience also helped me use more wisdom, and from then on, I carefully checked both ways each time I left the driveway.

Another time, I was outside in the snow with my sister. We were both pretty young at the time, and my sister suggested that we should try jumping on the trampoline with all the snow on it. This was something we had done before, and it was always fun, but right then it didn't seem right. I couldn't have explained it if someone had asked me why, but when she suggested it, I simply said, "No, let's not." So, we stayed out in the snow for a

bit, and not more than ten minutes later, an 80-foot tree fell on top of the trampoline. Yes, some might call the fact that we weren't on the trampoline luck, but luck is chance, and I believe that God has only good planned and won't leave my life up to chance.

These two examples helped me see the importance of listening to what God is communicating to us at every moment of every day. If we do this, then all we have to do is follow through with what we hear. Many of us have had times when we've heard God's voice and simply ignored it, believing that it wasn't important. Referring to God's "still, small voice," Mary Baker Eddy says on page 323 of *Science and Health*: "We are either turning away from this utterance, or we are listening to it and going up higher." >

Conrad jumps a gap on a freeride trail.



I'm always learning that God is constantly talking to us, and it's our job to listen and then act on what we are asked to do. We also need to remember that God's plan is always harmonious, so even if we slip up and make mistakes, He won't abandon us when we need Him.

I've found that one of the best ways for me to make sure that I'm being receptive to God's messages is to pray daily. Every day I affirm the truth about God and about myself as God's child, and I've

*God won't
leave my life
up to chance.*

found that this wakes me up and helps me listen to what God is saying. Mrs. Eddy says, "Your means of protection and defense from sin are, constant watchfulness and prayer that you enter not into temptation ..." (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 115).

So don't be tempted to ignore those loving messages from God. They are more important than you may think! ●

Conrad Heath is a junior in high school and loves running cross country, freeride biking, and skiing.

Originally published in the March 25, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Crashing stereotypes

by JENNY SAWYER

I was going to crash. I gave my bike's handlebars one last futile yank, but my tire lodged in the street trolley track. I was eating asphalt before I could blink.

Traffic stopped. I untangled myself from my twisted mess of a bike and hopped up as quickly as I could. I was scraped up and mortified, but basically unhurt. When I pulled my helmet out of my eyes, though, I saw two people emerging from the SUV that had stopped just a few feet away. A guy and a girl.

Now, if you'd asked me before the crash, I would never have characterized myself as a person who trafficked in stereotypes. I grew up in a total melting pot of a city. I loved diversity, didn't I? I was comfortable with it. And yet, when I saw that guy and girl coming toward me, my heart sank. He was wearing a letter jack-

et and his baseball cap was on backward. She had on a little sundress and all the right accessories. College students. Rich, obnoxious white kids may have been the words that flashed through my mind.

Yes, as the students ran toward me, I was busy stereotyping them. The saddest thing is that it didn't occur to me that I could possibly be wrong.

But wow, was I ever wrong. There, in the street, in the middle of rush hour, these two showed such concern and compassion. The guy fixed my bike—not enough to ride it, but enough to push it the last three blocks to my apartment. They offered to take me home and asked me if I was going to be OK. In those few minutes with my college "angels," I didn't sense even a hint of judgment or superiority or "rich kid" attitude. Weird-

ly, their selfless love left me feeling as though, instead of being in an accident, I'd been to church.

Their kindness was also a merited rebuke, and one that made me buckle down and pray. Each morning, I started my day with the "Daily Prayer" from Mary Baker Eddy's *Manual of The Mother Church*:

"Thy kingdom come; let the reign of divine Truth, Life, and Love be established in me, and rule out of me all sin; and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind, and govern them!" (p. 41).

But I'd never thought of the line "and rule out of me all sin" as a way to counteract the human mind's tendency to categorize, judge, and script (often negatively) our interactions with others.

After the bike crash, though, I started looking at that part of the prayer differently. When I asked God to cast sin—any misperception—out of me each moment of my day, I now included stereotypes in the mix. After all, wasn't seeing my neighbor, not as black or white, college student or Russian grandmother—but as a child of God first—a way of seeing the other part of that prayer, God's kingdom come, made manifest?

In my world, I realized, it wasn't enough to be "comfortable" with diversity. It wasn't enough to accept most differences and let a few subtle stereotypes fester. What my world, what the whole world, needs is my active faithfulness to the kingdom of heaven at hand.

What does this look like? For me, it's involved committing myself to understanding more about the infinitude and glory and beauty of the Divine. The Bible says that we have a heart to know God, and that God gave us this heart (see Jeremiah 24:7). I think this means that God created us with the ability to see the magnitude and harmony of His nature, right where mortality would present the differences and cultural baggage that seem to divide us.

In my little corner of the universe, this has allowed me to have a more God-centered perspective. To look on people with more grace. To interact with them with more joy, and with a greater expectation of good. To bear witness to the child of God in everyone.

I also see the broader possibilities of these prayers. If we each listened exclusively to that heart that knows God, what could that do for our families and churches? Better yet, as we prayerfully acknowledge that each of us is compelled to respond to that God-knowing heart, we'll see the inevitable end to tragedies like ethnic cleansing and religious or cultural conflicts.

That is, indeed, the kingdom that Jesus preached about. And it's definitely the kind of world I want to live in. Don't you? ●

Jenny Sawyer lives in Brighton, Massachusetts.

TMC Youth's website, time4thinkers.com, has featured this article as a blog.

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Originally published in the April 8, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Megan at her friend's lake house.



100%!

by MEGAN SELBY

Two summers ago, I was on a trip to California with my DiscoveryBound NLC (National Leadership Council) class. We were whitewater rafting and having a great time. When we reached our halfway point, we came out of the river to set up camp for the night. Before we set up camp, we had to change into dry clothes. Our raft guides had warned us about poison oak in the woods and to be careful about coming into contact with it.

The girls headed into the woods to change first. A few hours later, I began to feel uncomfortable. I noticed a rash on my legs, and right away I prayed with the truth, knowing that nothing could take away the joy I was having on this trip because God was right there with me. One of my friends came over, and we started to read the Christian Science Bible Lesson. One sentence stood out to me, and she encouraged me to memorize it. The sentence was from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "No power can withstand divine Love" (p. 224). I replaced the words, "No power can" with these words, "Poison oak cannot withstand divine Love." This meant to me that God, good, was all-powerful and nothing else could have control over me.

We had a Christian Science practitioner traveling with us on this trip and he

talked with me about my God-given spiritual perfection. He reminded me that I couldn't be outside of God's presence and there wasn't a place where error or poison could exist in His kingdom.

After a little while, I decided to join the rest of the group in a game of volleyball. I soon forgot about the rash on my legs and continued to participate in all the activities that were planned that evening. That night we were sleeping outdoors and there were a lot of stars to

look at while I was lying there. One last thought came to me. It was not to worry about when the rash was going to go away, but to realize that

I was already perfect and complete, because I am the reflection of God.

The next morning I woke up and was completely healed. The rash had disappeared, and I felt 100 percent! I was able to comfortably continue on our rafting trip. I've had many Christian Science healings in my life, but this was the first "big" healing that I have had on my own. I am very grateful for what I have learned, and this has made me see how to demonstrate Christian Science in everyday life. ●

Megan Selby is a junior in high school and enjoys sports and traveling.

I couldn't be outside of God's presence.

Originally published in the April 22, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

* Mandy is a freshman in high school. She loves spending time with her friends and many pets, playing basketball, and singing.

Our constant home

*On God, His children do rely.
He hears our every cry.
God is never absent or gone;
He holds us in His ceaseless dawn.
Even when we feel alone,
His arms are our constant home.
God is always crystal clear,
as He whispers,
“I am here.”*

—Mandy-kay Thornton Johnson

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Christian Science Sentinel.

Fight bullying with prayer

by KARL GARRETT

At my school there has been a big problem, and maybe it's at your school, too. It's called bullying. Some people at my school bullied a girl and even created a "hate club" about her. The situation got so bad her parents even took her out of school, and she appeared on national television to talk about her experience. Because of this, my whole school district has been holding more anti-bullying assemblies and campaigns in an effort to try to discourage bullying. These programs can help people learn to treat each other with more respect. However, a spiritual approach is something that isn't really covered in school, but I believe it's important to have it in the picture. So I have written this article to contribute a spiritual, prayerful approach.

I've realized that probably one of the biggest "bullies" in the Bible's New Testament is Saul (see Acts 9:1–20). He persecuted and hunted down the followers of Jesus, either killing them or sending them to prison. This all changed when one day, on his way to Damascus, he was surrounded by a light from heaven: "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." ("Kick against the pricks" was old-fashioned farming language, and a way of saying that Saul, like a stubborn ox, had been rebelling against God.)

Saul was then directed to contin-

ue on to the city. When he arose, Saul found he was blind and had to be led by the people who were traveling with him. He didn't drink or eat for three days. A disciple named Ananias went to Saul and restored his sight. Saul then began preaching about the Christ.

I think it's inspiring that, because of his one encounter with the Christ, Saul had a complete change of heart and became a follower of Christ. Mary Baker Eddy put it like this: "He learned the wrong that he had done in persecuting Christians, whose religion he had not understood, and in humility he took the new name of Paul. He beheld for the first time the true idea of Love, and learned a lesson in divine Science" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 326).

Bullies may try to harm you, either physically or mentally, because they see something "different" about you, and they feel they must put you down because of it. But it's good to know that everyone can have a change of heart. You can pray for bullies, that they can "see the light" as Saul did. And that they can go on to do good.

Once when a scribe came up to Jesus and asked him which of the commandments is the greatest, he answered, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30, 31). As stated in the second of these commandments, you must love other people as yourself. Any kind of violence or hate is a violation of this commandment expressed by Jesus.

When I was in seventh grade, my friends and I picked on and teased a boy we thought was a bit different. Just to

join in with the group, I started taking part more and more often, until I realized how much we were hurting his feelings. I started thinking about how everyone is created in God's image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26, 27) and that Jesus told us to love our neighbor as ourselves. So I decided to follow those two commands. I knew that none of us would like someone to treat us the way we were treating this boy. It took moral courage to break away from what my friends were doing and apologize to this boy for what I had done. I stopped doing what others thought was fun and began to set a good example by simply leaving him in peace and also being nice to him during class if he needed some help. I felt good about doing the right thing and not the "popular" thing, and it seemed that the boy felt better about himself as well. After a couple of weeks, my friends stopped bullying him, too.

So instead of being tempted to pick on others or putting up with being tormented yourself, you can turn to prayer. Let's all see the good in everyone because we know God made each and every one of us spiritually perfect and capable of recognizing the good in ourselves and others. If we all do this, and love everyone more, I'm sure we can play a huge part in putting an end to bullying. ●

Karl Garrett is a freshman in high school and enjoys horseback riding and mountain biking.

Karl practices polocrosse at summer camp.



Originally published in the May 6, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Trail running ... with Love

by QUINN HEINBAUGH

Running is one of my biggest passions. So you can imagine how excited I was when I had the opportunity to run 15 miles during my time at a summer camp for Christian Scientists! The camp offered trail running as a free choice activity, and I enthusiastically signed up.

I knew it would be hard. The path we were going to run started at 9,000 feet in elevation and wove up about 1,300 feet in altitude. This meant I would be going up against big hills, and harder breathing due to the high altitudes, which challenges even the fittest athletes. We woke up at 6:00 that morning, and as our small running group drove out to the site we were to start from, I was feeling very nervous. This would be longer than any route I had run before.

Before we started running, we took some time for inspiration. This included quotes from the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings, and stories of how other people had found protection and strength from turning to God. One quote, from the book of Isaiah, goes like this: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (40:31). The counselor who shared this quote pointed out that it could relate to a long run like the one we were about to start since it emphasizes the fact that God protects us from weariness when we "wait upon" Him.

Then we were off. The trail started with a big hill, then evened out for a few miles, which made it easier to run. I ran up higher in elevation, and the

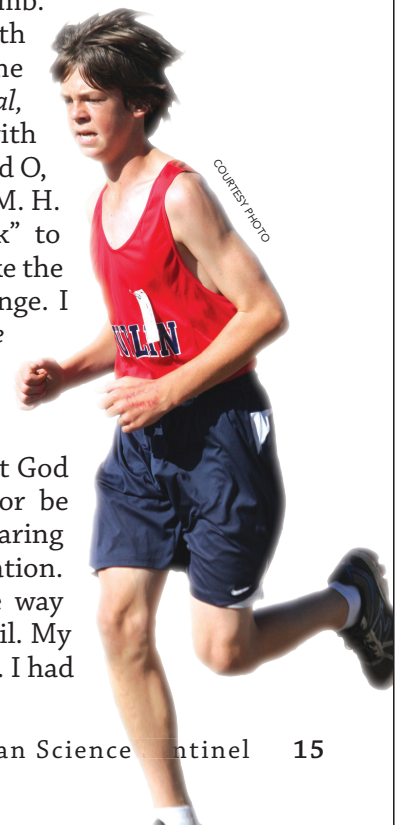
trees faded behind me as I climbed. Because our running group was spread out along the route, I was alone, high above the valley below. But as I ran, I could hear my friends from half a mile ahead cheering me on. They were high above me on the ridge. I kept repeating, "God is my energy" quietly to myself as a reminder that God is the one responsible, not just for sustaining me on this run, but also for everything I have accomplished so far.

At the top of our ascent, I came to a beautiful view. I could see the mountain range on my left, and on my right, I could see the little town below. The descent was tricky, however—the slippery rocks gave me more trouble than they had on the way up, and I was beginning to feel weary after the uphill climb.

So I decided to pray with Hymn No. 139 from the *Christian Science Hymnal*, which begins: "I walk with Love along the way, / And O, it is a holy day" (Minnie M. H. Ayers). I changed "walk" to "sprint downhill" to make the song go with the challenge. I knew that the word *Love* is capitalized in the hymn, which means that it is a synonym for God. And I knew that God would not let me fall or be hurt since He is always caring for every part of His creation.

I kept going all the way to the bottom of the trail. My run wasn't over, though. I had

*I was expressing
God through
running, and
His qualities can't
be exhausted
or run out.*



one more hill to overcome. The boundary to the camp property was on the top of the hill. This was the last stretch, and at that point I started feeling like I was going beyond striving and maybe I was pushing my body too hard. But I realized that, in this specific instance anyway, this thought was mortal mind—a false concept of my real thinking. My real thinking comes from God; mortal mind is simply a temptation to believe in a power opposite Him. Rather than give in to this temptation, I thought about something I had been reciting once a week for most of my life: “the scientific statement of being” from page 468 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. It starts, “There is no life, truth,

intelligence, nor substance in matter.” I realized that I was making a big mistake in thinking that I had to rely on my body to do this last stretch of the run. Instead, I could recognize that I was expressing God through running and that His qualities can’t be exhausted or run out.

Once I started thinking this way, I felt better, and I was able to get to the top of the hill and finish the race. We returned to camp, and I experienced no aching at all from the run—not even the next day. I am really grateful for this healing. ●

Quinn Heinbaugh is a freshman in high school. He enjoys playing soccer, running cross country, and riding his bike.

Originally published in the May 20, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Go ahead ... pray about it

by COURTLYN REEKSTIN

For as long as I can remember, whenever I lost something, I would halfheartedly think to myself: “Well, nothing can ever be lost in God’s kingdom. God is always guiding me and leading me in the right direction, so He will lead me to what I have lost.” Then I would look for the lost object, listening only to my own thoughts, turn up empty-handed, and come to the conclusion that praying to find lost items wasn’t reasonable and didn’t work. To comfort myself after losing something of importance or value, I would simply shrug it off, thinking that since Christian Science teaches we

This time, the message spoke to my heart.

are all spiritual and there is actually no substance in matter or material things, losing an object didn’t really matter. However, I knew this thinking was not quite right and needed to be corrected.

During my freshman year of high school at Principia, a school for Christian Scientists, I finally had an opportunity to really understand that nothing is ever lost in God’s kingdom. A few days before the opening night of the school’s musical production, *Crazy for You*, I was in the lobby of the auditorium rehearsing several of the dance numbers with my fellow dancers. I love to dance, and tap is my

favorite. This performance was very important to me, as I had worked very hard for months to make it perfect.

As we got ready to go back into the auditorium, I noticed that the metal tap on my tap shoe had come loose, and the tiny screw that held it in place was missing. I got very worried since there were no other tap shoes that I could wear, no other screws small enough to fix the tap, and no time to order new shoes before opening night. What was I going to do?

However, as quickly as those anxious thoughts came to me, they were replaced by the thought “pray about it.” At first, based on past experience, this seemed silly to me, and I wanted to ignore this angel message.

Then the message came to me again, this time more firmly, so I was obedient and started to pray. The idea was familiar. It was, “Nothing is ever lost in God’s kingdom.” This time, the message was really strong and spoke to my heart. I began to reflect on the spiritual truths I had learned as a child, knowing that God is always guiding, guarding, and governing me.

A verse from one of Mary Baker Eddy’s poems, which is also a hymn in the *Christian Science Hymnal*, came to mind:

Shepherd, show me how to go
O’er the hillside steep,
How to gather, how to sow,—
How to feed Thy sheep;
I will listen for Thy voice,
Lest my footsteps stray;
I will follow and rejoice
All the rugged way.

(*Poems*, p. 14)



I knew that God was my Shepherd and that He would lead me in the right direction—I only needed to listen for His voice, not my own, and know that I could never stray from the right path, or the truth.

Another quote—this one from the Bible—came to mind, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6). All I needed to do was fully and completely trust God, and He would direct me to a solution. I affirmed that there is only one Mind, God, and I am at one with that Mind. I couldn’t rely on worries, doubts, or even lean on my own understanding to guide

me. Instead, I needed to trust in God and His law of harmony.

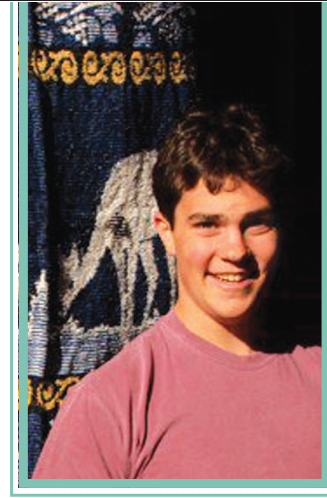
As I prayed, I crouched down on the lobby floor and began to feel around with my hand. Within just a minute, I felt my hand roll over the tiny screw. I quickly picked it up, had my tap shoe fixed, and made it on stage to perform the dances, all the while praising God.

I am so grateful for this proof of God’s guidance and complete care. In Mary Baker Eddy’s poem “Mothers Evening Prayer,” she tells us, “... God is good, and loss is gain” (*Poems*, p. 4). I understand this so much better now since the lost-screw situation helped me gain a strong confidence in God’s ever-presence. I truly and absolutely know I can always trust in God because He is forever guiding me and leading me down just the right path. Through humble prayer and listening, I know I will always be guided to find what is good. ●

Courtlyn Reekstin loves to dance, act, sing, and is captain of the “Poms” (cheer) team.

Originally published in the June 3, 2013, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Tim in front of a store in Cusco, Peru.



COURTESY PHOTO

Breaking barriers in Peru

by TIMOTHY STECKLER

Have you ever struggled to speak in a different language? Maybe you know the feeling of having no idea how to say what you are thinking. I have had my fair share of those moments since I grew up speaking English and had relatively few experiences to practice the Spanish I learned in school.

A similar situation occurred during the Pentecost, which is described in the second chapter of Acts in the Bible. There, Jesus' disciples were confronted with a situation in which many different languages were spoken in the same place. The disciples had an important message to convey and an absolute trust in God to guide them. They were "filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4)—and this allowed everybody to hear that message in their own language, clearly expressing the one divine Mind that united them.

This past summer, I had a small taste of this kind of divinely guided communication. This experience was a wonderful proof to me of the loving care that divine Mind bestows on us every day.

I arrived in Peru with a group of young

Christian Scientists and three adult leaders. We were going to construct a school for a village just outside of Cusco. We also planned to teach children in a neighboring village during that time. Three friends and I volunteered to teach music, and we spent hours before the trip preparing.

Right before the trip, however, I began to feel nervous. I knew very little Spanish, and much of the group did not know any at all. The leaders had passed out a sheet with some basic phrases, but they were looking to those of us who had learned Spanish in school to be the main communicators. I worried that we would not be able to communicate with these kids effectively and would miss an amazing opportunity to both teach and learn from them. Then, once we arrived in Peru, another teaching group was combined with ours, throwing off our carefully made plans at the last minute.

As we drove to the school, we frantically wrote down new lesson plans. Then there was yet another change: we were going to teach different age groups than originally planned! We came into the school disorganized, nervous, and with essentially no specific plans.

We first taught a group of fifth graders. When I was supposed to speak with them, my mind froze and the little Spanish I knew escaped me. We were able to continue the lesson by teaching some simple dances that didn't require too much talking. But as it went on, I decided to rely on God for help—even though I'd recently had some questions about Christian Science, and even doubts that I could really rely on God. I remembered the spiritual theme our class had decided on for the trip, "Loving through the eyes of God," and I asked myself: "What is your purpose in being here? Can you throw aside your own doubts and trust in God, Love, to guide and shepherd you?"

I realized that I needed to be open to trusting in Truth. That meant viewing these children as God saw them: perfect, upright, and loved. Gradually, I felt calm and confident in our group's ability to love and do good at this school.

My doubt faded as the first lesson went on, and I was able to speak mostly in Spanish throughout our time with the fifth graders. By the end, most of the kids were having a fantastic time. And afterward, things got even better. We next taught second graders and kindergartners, and we all saw the exuberant love and grace they expressed. By striv-

ing to love "through the eyes of God," as Jesus did, I gained an entirely new, spiritual perspective of who these kids were.

While we were teaching the last two groups, I found that the spiritual ideas I'd been thinking about led to a clarity of thought that I had rarely felt before. I was able to talk with the kids easily—in

fact, I had never before been able to speak Spanish so fluently! Everyone else was also able to communicate, even though many of them did not know Spanish to begin with. The experience reminded me of a quote from *Miscellaneous Writings* 1883–1896 by Mary Baker Eddy:

"When the heart speaks, however simple the words, its language is always acceptable to those who have hearts" (p. 262).

By being willing to trust in Love and see these kids as God's children—who certainly have huge hearts!—we were able to have a fantastic time with them. I saw and felt God's guidance as we loved through His eyes. ●

Tim Steckler is a junior in high school. He loves to act, sing, play music, run, and write.

Gradually, I felt calm and confident in our group's ability to love and do good at this school.

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