



# HOUSTON VISITING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSE SERVICE, INC.

February 2023

## 'How Gentle God's Commands'

The above title leads off the comforting hymn:

How gentle God's commands,  
How kind His precepts are;  
Come, cast your burdens on the Lord,  
And trust His constant care.<sup>1</sup>

Trusting God's gentle commands and feeling the kindness of God's precepts—these are assurances tired humanity seeks. We long to be held close, clasped tight, cared for, and cherished—without qualification or condition—by divine Love, our protector and preserver.

Sometimes we don't feel worthy of that love, though.

I once felt that way. I was sitting in a plane on the tarmac at the Cancun airport. The rain was coming down in sheets. My fellow passengers and I nervously peered out the windows and were visibly relieved when the captain announced his intent to wait for takeoff until the storm had passed.

But no sooner had I exhaled an "Oh, thank goodness" than the engines roared to life. The plane lurched forward and splashed through deep puddles the length of the runway. Yet neither the intense rain nor the gale-force winds had abated.

The plane was bouncing, jostling us—first on the ground, then during lift-off, then in the air. The sky looked dark and foreboding, fitting my frame of mind.

Frankly, I felt justified in being upset, for the captain had ignored his own announcement, had made what appeared to be a reckless decision, and had put all of us in a state of panic—and, I thought, of outright danger.

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As the plane nudged toward cruising altitude, the weather remained rough. Suddenly, brilliant light streamed through the windows, and a bright blue sky replaced the dark storm clouds. No more bouncing, pitching, and rolling. I sat there dumbstruck, smiling, thanking God profusely, and feeling foolish for having been so afraid and so resentful.

Naturally, the ire I'd kindled toward the captain completely melted away, replaced by complete peace. He and his crew knew that clear, calm, sunny skies were above us the whole while. Doubtless, they'd experienced abrupt transitions in the weather from below the clouds to above them many times. I hadn't before—hence my initial distrust, self-righteousness, and misery.

You could call my experience a "David" moment, when I realized, along with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalms 27:1). For I had learned that, despite my ugly attitude, I'd never been unworthy of God's forgiving love and unceasing protection.

Another admirer of David's Psalms was the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy. She had this to say about darkness and light: "Truth destroys falsity and error, for light and darkness cannot dwell together. Light extinguishes the darkness, and the Scripture declares that there is 'no night there.' To Truth there is no error, — all is Truth" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* 474:31–2 to 2nd .).

When we're facing mental storms and darkness in our lives, whether it be sickness, loneliness, chronic pain, guilt, frustration toward another person, lack, or fear, we're believing either that the problem is imposed on us from someone or something outside us or that it's part of our identity: *our* sickness, *our* bad temper, *our* panic. The light that dispels the darkness comes when we humbly acknowledge that nothing unlike God, good, can be present or have power over us. This prayer spares us from blaming the other guy or from attempting to fix something that appears out of whack. You can't fix *nothing*. If it doesn't come from God, it is *nothing*.

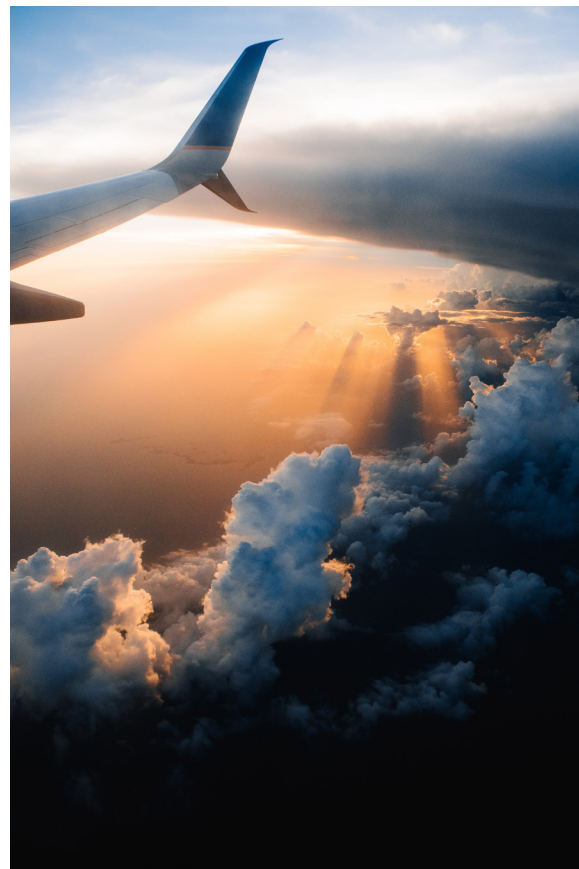


Photo by Tom Barrett on Unsplash

The Spanish literary great Miguel de Cervantes wrote: "Truth will rise above falsehood as oil above water."<sup>2</sup> The oil of inspiration and consecration<sup>3</sup> that rises above water is the truth that we're now and always held in God's tender embrace. We can know this truth with certainty—and give thanks.

Such spiritual knowing is the heart of Christian Science nursing. Susie Petersen, our *Journal*-listed CSN, crosses the threshold of each client's home assured that the light of Truth and Love is already present—and that "in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). This divine light provides the wisdom Susie applies to each case, as she gently, expertly gives practical aid that supports healing.

By the way, Susie is also happy to assist with simple errands and is always ready to read the Bible Lesson aloud to you.

We'll close our February letter with an apropos axiom from Presidents' Day honoree Abraham Lincoln: "Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be."<sup>4</sup>

1 *Christian Science Hymnal*, Hymn 124/402. Adapted by Philip Doddridge. The Christian Science Publishing Society.

2 Peterson, Gail. *Proverbs to live by: truths that live in words*. Kansas City: Hallmark Editions (1968). 56.

3 See the definition of OIL in the Glossary of *Science and Health*. 592.

4 Peterson. *Proverbs*. 30.

## Financial Assistance Available

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“Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee”  
*Christian Science Hymn 324*