

## No Separation

By Emily Staunton

In light of social distancing, I've been enjoying knowing that we are never distanced or separated from God. Christian Science establishes God as ever-present and therefore never separate from us.

Last week, I attended a testimony meeting at the Excelsior, Minnesota branch church. A church member shared this line from "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy: "Whatever is governed by God, is never for an instant deprived of the light and might of intelligence and Life" (p. 215:12).

The church member noted that viruses are believed to be passed in an instant. Yet, this quote contradicts that lie, asserting we are never separated from God for even an instant. There is no instant for error to exist.

I looked up the definition of "governed" from the line above and found that it means: "directed; regulated by authority; controlled; managed; influenced; restrained." (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)

The state of mind that recognizes that our lives are directed by God – that our thoughts are regulated and restrained from evil by goodness, and that we are controlled and influenced only by health – is never for an instant separated from Life, God.

How do we realize we aren't separated but are being directed by this power? This week's Lesson (March 23-29) has reminded me that it comes down to recognizing our relationship with God.

The Lesson starts with the idea of covenant in the Responsive Reading. "[God] will ever be mindful of His covenant." (Psalms 111:5) Some of Webster's definitions of covenant include, "a coming together; a meeting or agreement of minds; a mutual consent or agreement ... a contract."

I like contemplating that God is always maintaining promises to each of us.

Section II of this week's Bible Lesson reminded me that God's government is always active, but that it is our choice how much we recognize that power: "Our proportionate admission of the claims of good or of evil determines the harmony of our existence, – our health, our longevity, and our Christianity." (S&H p. 167)

An example of this choice was seen in the correlated Bible story in which the people with whom Joshua was speaking chose to serve the Lord rather than idols. Joshua said, “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24: 15, marker 7). This choice to serve the Lord is our covenant or promise with God.

I am reminded that Mrs. Eddy replaced the word “house” in her interpretation of the 23rd Psalm (S&H p. 578) to represent the word “consciousness.” We also have a hymn that says, “Home is the consciousness of good ...” (Christian Science Hymnal 497:1). With these ideas, I see that home/house can mean our consciousness.

This definition gives the Bible quote more meaning; “As for me and my house [consciousness], we will serve the Lord.” Who are we hosting in thought? Choosing God as the ruler of our house – or consciousness – is one way to recognize our inseparability from God.

I had an experience recently that reminded me of God’s ever-presence when I was tempted to feel drawn in by the current global thought about separation as a cure for a problem. A friend was sad while thinking about the semester ending and being separated from classmates. While I felt empathetic, I also felt helpless because I didn’t know what to say. As I prayed, the title of Louise Knight Wheatly Cook Hovnanian’s poem came to mind: “Teach me to love.” I just prayed, “God, teach me to love.” I didn’t know what more to do, but I knew that God would fulfill the need.

“I know I’ll make it through these changes, my friend told me. “But I don’t know how hard it is going to be.”

Very quickly, an analogy from running came to mind, and I asked my friend, who is also a runner, “When you’re running up a hill in a race, does God know how steep the hill is? Does the steepness stop or intimidate God?” Of course not. This idea made my friend laugh and feel connected to Christian Science in a tangible way. My friend thanked me because he could tell I had been listening to God. In that moment, both of us recognized we weren’t separated from God. I turned my thought to God and didn’t allow overwhelming thoughts to separate me from my conviction that God, as Love, is present.

Whenever error may seem to suggest lack, we can still choose God. God’s promise to us and our choice to serve/recognize God are both essential in helping us feel the unchanging closeness of Love.

