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A year after Columbine

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For many touched by last April's tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, the past year has been a roller coaster of emotion and media attention. As the two daily newspapers in Denver win Pulitzer Prizes for their original coverage of events, parents and friends struggle with a renewed barrage of media coverage, striving to move forward despite persistent reminders of the past.

Perhaps the salient question is the one Tom Mauser asked himself weeks after his son Daniel was killed: "How are you going to get on with your life?" (Andrew Murr, "Finding New Life After Columbine," Newsweek, April 17).

It's finding a mental peace that enables one to move on. Over the centuries, people have found comfort in biblical promises, such as this one in Isaiah: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (26:3). How is it possible that God can keep someone in perfect peace whose son or daughter has been suddenly taken away? Certainly not through mere human reasoning or the passage of time. What does it mean to keep thought "stayed" on God? It means to lean on God, to trust that He/She is present and is able to comfort. It means to think more about God than about a violent past; more about divine Love than hatred. God maintains mental peace as we keep our mind steadfastly on Him rather than on human events, and as we trust the divine power.

God is Love. Divine Love can so permeate our thoughts and motives that we feel it dwelling with us. God is Mind. By looking to the divine Mind for guidance on how to think and act, we can feel the assurance of everlasting life. God is not far from every one of us. But like utilizing an electric socket, one needs to plug in to the power. Leaning on God is plugging in to the divine source of peace, which is universal and impartial.

In the original Hebrew, peace, or shalom, means more than simply being unaffected by disturbance. It means "safe, well, happy"; also "completeness, soundness." Leaning on God, trusting God to renew and restore us, is the only way to feel complete and safe and blessed. This is God's promise to us.

Leaning on God does not mean forgetting loved ones! In fact, by turning away from bad memories, we can hold on to loved ones with a stronger and purer love than ever before. By knowing God as divine Love, the all-embracing power that transcends time and space, we can feel united in Love with those who have passed away. This transcends human affection. Thinking about the power of divine Love to transform and heal allows us to feel God's deep love for us, and to feel comforted.

Turning wholeheartedly to God allows us to progress without feeling guilty. We gain a conviction that life is eternal, that our loved ones continue to progress and grow, even though they are unseen to human eyes. Knowing that their lives are continuing, unstopped by hatred, fear, or violence, we gain the courage to open our hearts to the love of God. This always brings progress to human experience, for God's love never leaves us where it found us. Leaning on God transforms and heals us.

The Monitor's founder, Mary Baker Eddy, began her book "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" with these words concerning steadfast trust in God: "To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings" (pg. vii). These blessings include peace as well as progress. Following the assassination of President McKinley in 1901, Mrs. Eddy wrote Mrs. McKinley a letter of consolation, quoting the above Scripture and adding: "Trust in Him whose love enfolds thee.... Divine Love is never so near as when all earthly joys seem most afar" ("The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany," pg. 290).

God hears every prayer. We can feel a more perfect peace, a stronger sense of safety and well-being, that comes only from divine Love.

And God shall wipe away

all tears from their eyes; and

there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.

Revelation 21:4