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Liftoff with God

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Light from the morning star pierced the moonless night sky. My husband and I followed this light from the "star," actually the planet Venus, to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Reserve near Socorro, New Mexico, where 12,000 sandhill cranes winter. Arriving before dawn, we followed the taillights of intrepid birders like ourselves to a flight deck overlooking a watery marsh.

Bundled in layers against the crisp cold desert air, we silently walked onto the boardwalk. The bold light of Venus reflected in front of us revealing shadows and shapes gliding across the still waters.

The first lines of my favorite book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," played out before my eyes: "The wakeful shepherd beholds the first faint morning beams, ere cometh the full radiance of a risen day." We weren't shepherds, but birders watching over flocks of ducks and geese. The Oscura Mountains appeared on the horizon backlit by an unseen sun. Ducks separated from hummocks of tall grass.

6:20 a.m. *A rushing sound gathers and grows until suddenly a swarm of 12,000 sandhill cranes rises in undulating black waves along the horizon.*

6:30 a.m. *The growing light reveals northern shovelers, their wide beaks scooping breakfast from the bog. Elegant northern pintails with ribbons of white along their swanlike necks float past. Individual voices of snow geese trumpet the coming dawn.*

6:35 a.m. *The honking suddenly fuses into thunder as 21,700 snow and Ross's geese lift off in unison - so close to us that we can feel the wing beats.*

As my husband and I trekked back to the waiting warmth of the car, we glowed in wonder with this sight of a morning liftoff etched in our minds.

Every morning the wintering waterfowl repeat the spectacle. The scene spoke to me of rising to meet the dawn, announcing the end of night, being eager to meet the new day. The enthusiasm, strength, and vigor inspired me.

Am I eager to meet each day? Am I willing to forget the past and greet the present with confident expectation?

I remember a time when I felt bogged down in problems. There seemed to be no escape. My future was determined by other people's decisions, and what I did or didn't do made little difference.

I sought solace in the Bible and Science and Health. Like the morning star, these books were shining a light into my feelings of futility. I would read until my heart lifted. I would read until inspiration honked in my head.

I discovered a summary of "fundamental propositions of divine metaphysics." Two of the propositions are: "God is All-in-all" and "God is good" (Science and Health, page 113). What all-embracing statements! They didn't deal with the details of my life. But they cast a light on them. If God is All-in-all and God is good, then God governs the human situation in all its detail. I clung to this promise. I trusted its truth. Despite the mental darkness, I began to anticipate a dawn.

I glimpsed that God, not other people, governed me. With a growing confidence in God, I experienced my own liftoff. The circumstances hadn't changed, but my view of them had. I wasn't stuck swimming in a bog; God had good in mind for me. I was beginning to see that. My life changed. I became happier. I welcomed each morning and cherished every evidence of good.

I was a child when this happened. My parents did divorce, and we moved several times before settling down. I continued to face challenges. But every day I would lift off with God and find the answers I needed.

6:55 a.m. *Stillness settles as a yellow globe hangs over the mountains. The snow geese have left to feed in fields far from the ponds.*

The vision of a rising flock reminds me to rise each morning in jubilant expectation of God's goodness.