Feeling rejected? God has a plan for you

By Walter Rodgers

From the April 18, 2011 issue of the Christian Science Sentinel

This is the season when many young people find themselves besieged with feelings of inadequacy or failure. They have run the gauntlet of high school, and perhaps failed to get accepted at the college of their choice. Others about to graduate from university may find the jobs they hoped for just aren’t there. Disappointment, discouragement, and defeat well up, following closely on the heels of that “We regret to inform you” letter.

The weight of rejection can fall like a sledgehammer, crushing a person’s sense of self-worth, especially when he or she sees friends going off to “better schools” or getting high-paying jobs straight out of college. But measuring our growth and success by the achievements of others is a bad game plan.

Christian Science teaches that we each have our own individual passport to the fulfillment of God’s plan for us, though it requires patience, and demands that we begin by praying for ourselves instead of wishing for admittance to a specific college or employment with a big-name firm. Repeat: The plan is not yours or mine, but God’s, and every step along the way calls for spiritual progress, even if we can’t yet see the good that assuredly lies ahead of us.

None of us can ever be defeated, no matter how bleak or bitter the human picture, when we acknowledge that God, divine Love, is the only source of good in our experience. From the perspective of Christian Science, our only failure is neglecting to put God first, and even then we are merely postponing the inevitable.

Hezekiah, a Biblical king of Judah, had about as much reason for discouragement as one can imagine. His enemy Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, and his armies were sweeping across the Middle East, conquering town after town with sword and spear. Viewing the bas relief of that Assyrian army and its chariots even today, in the British Museum, helps you understand why Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem were quaking in fear.

Hezekiah had received a mocking letter from Sennacherib that said, “Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?” (II Kings 19:10, 11).

How often does mortal mind—which Mary Baker Eddy described as “. . . all beliefs relative to the so-called material laws, and all material objects, . . .” and as “an illusion”—love to prophesy defeat and failure (Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 36)? Sometimes it whispers, “Give up. You’re not good enough.” At other times the “Sennacherib taunt” may take the form of “You are ill and you may die, and neither Christian Science nor God will heal you.”

King Hezekiah confronted the insolent mocking of Sennacherib by turning to God in deep and humble prayer. He said, “O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only” (II Kings 19:19).

This acknowledgment that there is but one God—then, now, and forever—is our salvation from despair and disease. Christian Science recognizes no situational hopelessness as being beyond God’s reach. Hezekiah demonstrated this when he turned to God, seeking deliverance from the blasphemous boasts of Sennacherib.
It is really important to daily acknowledge that God always has a wise and excellent plan for each of us.

God answered the Judean king’s prayer, saying that the king of Assyria “shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it” (verse 32). Sennacherib and his armies were sent packing, tails between their legs.

The verdicts of oriental potentates, as well as of academic admission officers, human resource managers, or medical doctors, have no gravitas when we strive to understand the teachings of Christian Science, which hold all of us, the children of God’s creating, immune from cruel taunts and the verdicts of the “carnal mind” (see Rom. 8:7).

No wonder Mrs. Eddy penned these words of comfort for all struggling with rejection, despair, or disease: “Remember, thou canst be brought into no condition, be it ever so severe, where Love has not been before thee and where its tender lesson is not awaiting thee. Therefore despair not nor murmur, for that which seeketh to save, to heal, and to deliver, will guide thee, if thou seekest this guidance” (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, pp. 149–150).

It’s really important to acknowledge daily that God always has a wise plan for each of us. As we cultivate this expectancy of God’s goodness and His blessings, then seeming failures or rejections translate into “God has something even better in store for me.” And He always does, because divine Love is ever pouring out its treasures upon us.

Walter C. Rodgers was a news correspondent in Washington, D.C., Europe, and the Middle East.