

To the Big Children

*Father-Mother good, lovingly
Thee I seek, —
Patient, meek,
In the way Thou hast, —
Be it slow or fast,
Up to Thee.*

Mary Baker Eddy

Fern Lodge Focus

August 1992

***Annual Meeting — September 27 at 2:00 in the afternoon
at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Hayward***

Nola A. Cook, C.S.B.

Like as a mother, God comforteth His children

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We Hope You Will Join Us ...

Fern Lodge Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 27, 1992, 2:00 p.m.

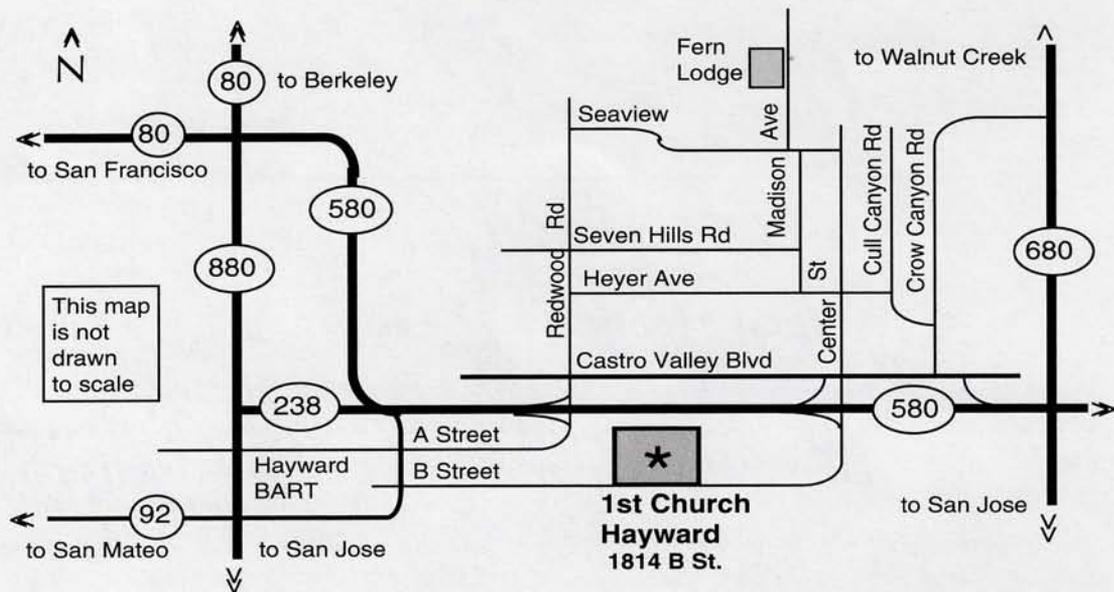
First Church of Christ, Scientist

1814 B Street • Hayward, California

Nola A. Cook, C.S.B. will speak on the topic,

Like As A Mother, God Comforteth His Children Hymn 174

The program will include reports by Christian Science nurses and a message from the Fern Lodge Board.



Ample parking is available in the Church lot, and child care will be provided in the Children's Room.

Mary Baker Eddy's precious poem, *To the Big Children*, helps us see how to progress toward a fuller understanding of our nature as children of God. The gentleness and compassion of this poem remind us of the tender care expressed in Christian Science nursing. Christian Science nurses seek the understanding of the relationship of man to God, which heals the sick and comforts those who mourn. Every word of Mrs. Eddy's verse overflows with inspiration for us when we turn to our Leader for guidance as we care for ourselves and others.

Father-Mother tenderly expresses the unbroken, loving relationship of man to God. Our divine Parent is *good*, not merely characterized by goodness, but the very being of good. What thought is more reassuring to a nurse as he or she goes to serve one who is praying to God for healing? God, to whom we pray, is the source of our inheritance; the qualities He imparts are the only qualities man can manifest, and every quality of God is good, always and in all ways. As nurses we are not called to help a sick or disabled person to cope with limitation, we're called to bear witness to the child of God's creating, the whole, healthy expression of God's nature, the living manifestation of universal good.

The call for a nurse is a call for love and for a deeper understanding of God. When asked to help, a nurse can respond, *lovingly Thee I seek*. If we would know God's children and how to serve them, we must have an understanding of God. Rather than turning first to the situation which seems to need attention, the nurse can turn wholeheartedly to God, seeking a clearer understanding of Him and His creation.

Turning to God is not turning away from the individual who has called for help, because every man's real individuality is the reflection of God. The care a Christian Science nurse has to offer is mental support for another's growing concept of

his or her true identity as God's reflection. When we pray to understand God, we let God direct our thoughts, our perceptions, and our actions, and we will be able to discern His children with sufficient clarity to aid those who pray to Him for healing. Keeping our thoughts focused on seeking God will help us avoid the human pit-falls which would lessen the healing effectiveness of our nursing work.

One common challenge to inspired Christian Science nursing is the temptation to classify nursing needs on the basis of the length of time care is needed. Yielding to this temptation may be done consciously, as when words such as "long-term" or "short-term" care are used to describe the services at Fern Lodge, or when someone applies, for himself or for a relative or friend, to come to the facility expecting the stay to be for "the rest of his life."

Time-influenced thinking in regard to Christian Science nursing may also appear to be unconscious. When a nurse has cared for an individual for weeks, months, or even years, and there has been little visible change in condition, it is tempting to expect to deal with the same physical condition, day after day. This may even be done with what we feel are loving intentions, as when the nurse seeks new ways to help the person deal with the condition. Christian Science nurses never should expect to see disease or limitation of any kind attached to any individual. In those instances where it is challenging to maintain our expectancy of health and freedom in the face of a long-standing disability, we can pray our Leader's poem and consider deeply the meaning of the words *Patient, Meek*.

What is patience? Is it waiting, without doing anything, for something to happen? No, patience is an active quality. Jesus, in his parable of the sower and the seed, described those who receive the word of God like this, *That* (seed which fell)

on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15). And Mrs. Eddy makes this humorous, but instructive, reference in Science and Health (515:4-5), *Patience is symbolized by the tireless worm, creeping over lofty summits, persevering in its intent.* To be patient is to bring forth fruit and to work tirelessly.

A Christian Science nurse we know has called patience “the willingness to do the right thing at the right time, listening to God for direction.” The patient nurse listens tirelessly for God’s voice, telling of the spiritual individuality of each of His children, whole and complete, here and now. Then the nurse will do what seems right to support the expression of that individuality, cheerfully acknowledging the infinite possibilities that attend each moment with God.

Meekness, what a wonderful nursing quality it is! *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* The meek have been described as those who are never self-righteous or self-important, because they recognize that all good comes from God. They stand firm in the face of all evil and obey God’s command, no matter what the circumstances or the consequences. The Greek word for *meek* means gentleness, and reverence and humility before God. These qualities of thought and action are the evidence of the grace which is needed for nursing. Meekness allows and requires the nurse to turn

humbly, with unswerving faith, to God for guidance in any nursing situation. He or she can then echo Mrs. Eddy’s words, “*In the way Thou hast, let me live the love that demonstrates Your care.*”

Think of the story in Luke’s gospel (8:41-56) of Jesus, when he was called to Jairus’ home to tend to a young girl who *lay a dying*. Here was a situation that called for the utmost haste — a twelve year old girl whose life was in danger —

what human condition could evoke more compassion, or call more earnestly for an immediate response? But what did Jesus do on the way to Jairus’ house? He healed and comforted a woman who had been suffering for twelve years from an affliction which certainly would cause discomfort, but probably would not be immediately life-threatening. He stopped to speak tenderly with her and to allow her to express her gratitude for what God had done for her. We are told that this woman *had spent all her living upon physicians*, and yet Jesus said to her, *Daughter, be of good*

comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. He not only healed her, but he also took the opportunity to assure her that the faith which had made her whole would also comfort her and grant her the peace she surely yearned for.

Jesus was not concerned about the time it would take him to care for the woman in the street and the effect the resulting delay might have on the well-being of the young girl whose condition had been described to him in dire terms. What



can we learn from our Master's loving example in this situation? For one, we can acknowledge that although material conditions may appear severe, even hopeless, God is able to heal and to restore the evidence of harmony in every case. We can quit trying to judge which conditions are serious and which are not, and understand that all conditions associated with the belief of life in matter are equally serious in that they all call for instant, constant, prayer that denies their role in determining man's health, comfort, activity, or peace.

How long should we care for another? The big children's prayer tells us. We pray, *Be it slow or fast*, as we seek to follow patiently, meekly, the way that leads to the abiding awareness of the presence of our Father-Mother good, and our being as God's children. Does it matter how long a difficulty has persisted in an individual's experience when we are considering how best to offer the care we have to give? It does not; time never can be a factor in the care God showers on His children, and it cannot influence or determine what care we will give, or to whom, or with what urgency.

Christian Science nurses can learn from Jesus' example that individuals who might be classified by a material view of health as needing "long-term" or "supportive" care, are just as deserving and in just as urgent need of the tender, healing ministration of Christ as others who seem to be dealing with conditions believed to be "serious"

or in need of "intensive" or "professional" care. Nurses also can see, as Jesus did, that taking the opportunity to comfort one individual cannot deprive another of the care he or she needs.

The time-free nature of care that has its source in divine Love means that an activity which blesses one cannot injure another by delaying needed attention. Wholeness and harmony are man's nature as a child of God and because of this, health is eternally his. The understanding of Christian Science assures us that *time is no part of eternity*, and that health is present now and forever, regardless of the testimony of the time-bound physical senses.



How can we know that the care we give really will meet the needs of those who call us? How can we be sure that we are doing the right thing when we stop to help one while on our way to help others? We can remember our prayer! If our thoughts are focused by the spirit implied in the words, *Father-Mother good,*

lovingly Thee I seek, we can trust God to guide us each moment of our lives. And we'll remember that the goal of our prayer is to follow the way God has prepared for each of us, — *Up to Thee* — up to the altitude of spiritual perception that always beholds our heavenly Parent's plan for us and for our fellow man, a plan that includes eternal and ever-present health, harmony and peace.

George Strong
Administrator

I took part in the Spring Christian Science nursing seminars at Fern Lodge. Our group included *Journal*-listed nurses, others who had taken training, and some, like me, with no previous nursing experience. I'd like to share a few highlights from the sessions.

The Role of Christian Science Nursing in the Mission of Church

The mission of our Church includes far more than just healing sickness. The Church's mission is akin to that of the Christ-power, *to take away the sins of the world*. For our Church to fulfill this mission, each of us must heal sin in ourselves. Nursing is not just something we do because others have needs. We nurse because we have a need — the need to work out our own salvation.

It is our Christian duty to care for one another, and we can fulfill our duty because we reflect God's constant care for His children. The demand and the desire to care for others is our nature, our being. Our care is evidence of the fact that we are the manifestation of God, divine Love.

The Ethics of Christian Science Nursing

Nursing ethics are the Christian ethics which guide our daily lives. Ethical thought and action come from our relationship to God, and the basis for our ethics is found in the Bible and in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy. If we base ethics on personal opinion, or the desire to be humanly good, we frequently make mistakes. And aren't human mistakes the result of human ignorance of God? As Mrs. Eddy writes, when we gain a right understanding of Him, harmony is restored.

When we base our ethics on spiritual facts rather than human opinions, we don't need to worry about making a wrong decision or missing something we need to notice. Error can't hide from the truth which destroys it. When we pray for spiritual discernment, the ethical way to think and act will become plain to us, and we will see our will lost in God's.

Confidentiality is vital to nursing ethics. It helps keep those we work with "hid with Christ." Nurses going off duty may feel it is right to tell oncoming nurses what to expect. But divulging unnecessary information about a patient is a subtle form of malpractice. Prayer and spiritual sense are needed. They enable us to discern when to speak, what to say, and when to keep quiet.

Mobility

When we nurse we can't think of patients as suffering mortals with real problems that need to be changed. Mrs. Eddy says, *it is mental quackery to make disease a reality*. We strive to see each individual as God does, perfect, whole and complete, right now! God is doing the caring. He is in charge, and we nurse from the basis of perfect God and perfect man.

Mobility is unhampered movement, coordination, things working together, strength, balance. We are mobile because we reflect God, who is always active and ever-present. We don't get out of bed without God; we don't walk without God; we don't do anything without God, because we are His spiritual reflection. Perfection is in Truth and the body manifests perfection as our thought about it conforms to the truth. Love impels us to nurse; Life impels us to move, walk, dance, etc.

Special Considerations when Working in Someone's Home

As Mrs. Eddy says in *Science and Health*, *home is the dearest spot on earth*. When we enter a patient's home it's important to remember that we are not there to take over and change things to suit our personal opinions. God governs the home we are going into, and we are there to assist the individual living there.

When we prepare to go into someone's home, we should keep a spiritual sense of life and home in our thought. The material evidence may tempt us to believe the lies of disorder or lack of care. Our affirmation of God's constant, loving care for

— Reports from participants

His children and their home will allow us to see harmony in the place where discord would appear, and then we will be prepared to offer helpful assistance.

In *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy describes Mary Magdalene anointing Jesus' feet with oil. The qualities Mary expressed are nursing qualities. She was not pushy, but she had a purpose, and she stuck to it. She was humble, gentle and quiet. She was resourceful in using her hair and tears to wipe Jesus' feet (not that we have to do that in particular!), and she carried herself with dignity and respect. Our Leader makes it clear that those nursing qualities expressed by Mary are essential for us to manifest if we are to heal spiritually.

I feel I have a foundation for offering to help others who rely on prayer for healing. Nursing is spiritual activity. When I support an individual's desire to rely on God for healing, I am nursing.

Valerie Hickam
Fremont

The nurses' sincerity, hunger to support healing, and dedication to God and mankind are expressed in constant examination of their thought through prayer — asking themselves what thoughts they are taking into the patient's room or home and whether it purifies the mental environment and contributes to healing.

Nursing is the arm of the Christ reaching out, the *cup of cold water in Christ's name*; the reverence for God that allows the light to shine through.

The emphasis is on SPIRITUAL caring first and the many practical ways it is manifested in caring for the physical needs. This, to me, is evidence of the *practical Christianity* Mrs. Eddy speaks of as *meeting the needs of mortals in sickness and in health*. Every problem, issue or

concern is taken first to Spirit which indicates the useful steps required to meet the physical need.

Nursing is a discipline in which "the rubber meets the road" — in which the healing taught in Christian Science is PROVED to be *a revealed and practical Science*; not just talked about, but proved daily, hourly, and minute by minute.

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment as well as attend the seminars.

Barbara Romero
Pleasant Hill

I think the real value will be evidenced in what comes of all we learned and why we kept coming back for twelve weeks. I don't know specifically how I will be led to use what I learned, but I know I felt led to be there and am endeavoring to use the new ideas I learned as I go about my day in my community.

The experiences the nurses shared were a very practical help. They impressed me with the idea that nursing isn't so much what you try to think but is more what you are. I appreciated their high standards and their obvious love for God and man. And I also enjoyed all the good humor, ...*there are wit, humor, and enduring vivacity among God's people* (*Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 117).

Thank you all for preparing a wonderful feast! The fruitage will be ongoing, I'm sure.

Kathy Lee
Palo Alto

Christian Science Nursing Seminars, Fall 1992

Thursday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m.
September 17 through December 17

On pages 6 and 7 you may read reports from people who attended the first series of Christian Science nursing seminars at Fern Lodge. These discussions have proven valuable to the nurses who conduct them, to Fern Lodge, and to the participants. Some told of experiences where they used specific insights they gained in the seminars within a week after a topic was discussed.

The next series begins September 17, 1992. These seminars will be held in the evenings, from 7 to 9 p.m., so those who cannot come during the day will have an opportunity to take part. One topic will be considered each Thursday, except Thanksgiving, and you are welcome to attend as many you wish. A flyer is enclosed which tells the specific topics to be discussed.

Benevolence Conference Planned

September 28 and 29 Fern Lodge is sponsoring a conference in San Francisco among California organizations which are involved with nursing and benevolence activities, along with some Bay-area Christian Science practitioners and teachers.

We plan to discuss benevolence associated with providing Christian Science nursing and related care in our communities. We will seek to identify and improve the means for collecting and distributing contributions given to help those with financial needs, especially for care given in individual's homes. The group will also consider the benefits and drawbacks of health insurance and the government financial aid programs — Medicare and Medi-Cal.

Mother Church Recognition

As announced in 1990, The Mother Church soon will discontinue on-going inspections of Christian Science nursing facilities. The Nursing Activities Department is now visiting each facility that wishes to be recognized by the Church as an organization providing Christian Science nursing services, to help the facility determine if they meet the Church accreditation standards. The Mother Church will give facilities which comply with the current standards a letter of continued recognition. These standards include the requirement that facilities conduct self inspections at least once a year. In July, 1992 Fern Lodge was visited by a Nursing Activities representative, and we have received a letter acknowledging our compliance with the standards and recognizing Fern Lodge as an organization offering Christian Science nursing.