



FERN LODGE FOCUS — June 2003

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This photo shows the patio outside a Fern Lodge patient room.

One much-loved phrase pops into mind when summing up our activities at Fern Lodge: God is *Love*. Such a simple, and well-used expression can seem to lose its potency for us. But just think if all our thoughts and acts were based on that one truth, that one divine, infinite, ever-present Principle, what a different world we'd be living in today!

Nursing is simply *loving*. And loving is simple. But things that are simple aren't always easy, are they? Loving requires laying down of self, of human ways and means. It puts God, Love, first. Love is not a doormat, but a doorway. Love gives entrance to the highest selfhood of man and the kingdom of heaven. We are loving in the fullest sense of the word when we see our fellow man correctly. Divine Love is an ever-bubbling spring welling up in our hearts, spilling over to bless everyone we work with.

We have a full house of patients to bless and a wonderful group of dedicated nurses who express a growing sense of grace and dominion. What draws them? The desire to know more about God as Love. What keeps them coming back? The irresistible need to practice and perfect that simple command of our Master to *love one another*. God's love is not a loan to us that might be repossessed during an unworthy moment! Because His love is merciful and constant, we owe Him an endless debt of love. Our gratitude for His infinite Love impels *us* to love Him and His expression, man, even more. So in this way, nursing helps us balance our account with God.

We have healings to share today. A patient who was usually up and walking, suddenly was unable to sit up and move on her own. The situation was very painful. The practitioner and staff continued to acknowledge her true spiritual selfhood, free of *any* material restriction. After several weeks, she just as suddenly was able to sit upright and walk on her own, in *complete freedom*. Another patient came to us after a stay in a hospital, with dire predictions for her future. During a Bible Lesson reading, she

became aware of a tendency to be critical and realized it needed to be healed. Later that day she felt all animosity drain out of her, and she no longer had a desire to criticize. Several weeks later she went home *well*, happy, and in her words, a changed woman.

Other patients persist in overcoming fear, and they continue to gain more dominion in their thinking, and more freedom of movement. Some may feel frustrated when healing seems to take longer. Don't we all! But the patients are reading *Science and Health* together, and they are learning more about how their thought can be transformed.

Reading *Science and Health* has a profound effect on our nursing. The difference in the relations among staff members and patients is remarkable. We have seen how divine Love corrects and governs man much better than we can. We leave our discussions refreshed and invigorated, with our mental sleeves rolled up in renewed strength, going forward to meet the next challenge presented by false world beliefs. *Science and Health* is a wonderful textbook on Christian Science nursing!

Our Nursing Education program accepts students at *any* time. If you want to express more love in your lives, you might consider serving in some capacity at Fern Lodge or a Christian Science nursing facility near you. Soon we'll be giving our Care Workshops for churches in the Bay Area. And we provide in-home care as we are able in our immediate area. Call us or pay us a visit to learn more about Christian Science nursing or our nursing services.

We are so grateful for all the love expressed towards Fern Lodge this past year, in prayerful *and* financial support. First Corinthians 13:13 affirms our need for faith, hope, and charity, saying that the greatest is charity. *The Message*, a Bible translation by Eugene Peterson, puts it this way: "Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love. Go after a life of love as if your life depended on it—because it does."

Ron Ballard opened his talk with a discussion of studies conducted with patients who had “serious life-threatening conditions.” These studies came to the conclusion that, “...patients who were prayed for just did better,” and by better was meant, “...everything that word implies.” The following are excerpts from Mr. Ballard’s talk.

What the studies should do is lay open the hitherto closeted questions of “what is the power behind prayer,” “what is the role of the individual who prays relative to this power,” “what place does medical practice hold in the domain of prayer,” and “what is actually being prayed for?” The future of Christian healing largely depends on the understanding and agreement to the answers of these questions.

Who will answer these questions? I would submit to you that while we can all pray that the divine intelligence reigns and is in everyone, these questions must be answered persuasively by those who have first hand experience in them and are willing to hone their answers in ways that others can understand and grasp. While heartened to see the willingness of many physicians to grapple with the role and power of prayer in the healing of the sick, it has become obvious to me that there is a crucial role to be played by the thought of those not bogged down in material and medical theory. Those of us who have experienced healing in our lives through prayer alone carry the responsibility for the future of this healing method, the responsibility to answer the questions that are raised from its practice.

Many physicians are realizing the need to consider seriously the belief structure or mental terrain of a patient in their efforts to affect a cure. Some are

even realizing the beneficial or deleterious effects their own prognoses are having on their patients. There is growing recognition of the dire effects some prognoses may have when patients are informed of what they can expect in terms of symptoms or length of recovery or life. This understanding will eventually prove to be no sidebar to the healing process. The role of the quality of thought in each case will eventually be accepted as a crucial determining factor. Mrs. Eddy was no stranger to these conclusions and encouraged physicians to consider this impact. She wrote in *Science and Health*:

**Those of us
who have
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The doctor’s mind reaches that of his patient. The doctor should suppress his fear of disease, else his belief in its reality and fatality will harm his patients even more than his calomel and morphine, for the higher stratum of mortal mind has in belief more power to harm man than the substratum, matter.... A patient’s belief is more or less moulded and formed by his doctor’s belief in the case, even though the doctor says nothing to support his theory. His thoughts and his patient’s commingle, and the stronger thoughts rule the weaker. Hence the importance that doctors be Christian Scientists. (pp. 197, 198)

Mrs. Eddy also recognized, however, that the “stronger thought” is not always that of physicians or the majority of human opinion—that the thought instructed with what she calls divine Science, or the laws of God, can supercede them. Consider this case: a man came home from work not feeling well, and quickly his condition worsened to the point that he could not stand. His wife encouraged him to seek some remedy either through Christian Science treatment or medical treatment. He declined to do either. At that point she called his parents who took their son to the emergency room. The doctor told the family that he had an untreatable virus and sent

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him home to wait it out. At this point the wife called a Christian Science practitioner. The practitioner, recognizing not only the fear in the family but the implications of the doctor's prognosis, set to work to reverse mentally the imposed mental conviction that the patient was suffering from an incurable disease. The practitioner replaced that morbid belief with the assurance that came from the laws of divine health and harmony, notably that disease was unknown to God, divine Mind, and for that reason it had to be unknown to the patient, who spiritually was the expression or manifestation of that Mind. The practitioner knew enough to undo the majority opinion with the thought that came from divine intelligence. The practitioner worked with this passage from *Science and Health*:

The universal belief in physics weighs against the high and mighty truths of Christian metaphysics. This erroneous general belief, which sustains medicine and produces all medical results, works against Christian Science; and the percentage of power on the side of this Science, must mightily outweigh the power of popular belief in order to heal a single case of disease. The human mind acts more powerfully to offset the discords of matter and the ills of flesh, in proportion as it puts less weight into the material or fleshly scale and more weight into the spiritual scale. (pg 155)

Shortly the patient retired for what was left of the evening and slept through the night, awakening free of the difficulty and going back to work. Some months passed and the family moved to a new locale. One day the wife was called by the administrator of the health clinic to which the case had been referred by the doctor. The administrator carefully inquired whether her husband was "still with us?" When assured that he was, the administrator said that they had found the referral which had slipped behind a file cabinet. She told this man's wife that

her husband had been diagnosed with meningitis which was in its final stages and that he was not expected to recover.

Let's revisit a phrase I quoted just a minute ago: "...and the percentage of power on the side of this Science must mightily outweigh the power of popular belief in order to heal a single case of disease." That phrase will need to be understood and practiced more than ever before in the coming decades by the alert Christian healer; one cannot expect to ignore the mental climate in which one heals and find success. Already those skilled in this practice know that stubborn claims of disease often evidence unhandled mental malpractice or the intrusion of thought that argues injuriously regarding the welfare

of the patient. The "who" of mental malpractice is not nearly as significant as the "what"—what argument of thought is providing credibility for the perpetuation of this discord? Is it medical diagnoses, professionally or self-induced? Is it consentaneous human belief or

the majority human opinion regarding some situation? Is it a sense of heredity that assumes one is predisposed to conditions? One's sophistication in this detection is an important skill in healing and is gained through spiritual maturity.

One may ask, "But isn't healing really a matter of relying on God to be the healer and the great revealer of all factors necessary for consideration?" Yes, certainly the power of divine intelligence, Love, is the healer, but if this is all the explanation there is to healing, why the discovery of divine Science? Does not the concept of science mean that there are laws that have to be understood and practiced? If all there is to healing is having faith that God will take care of us, why did not Mrs. Eddy call this discovery Christian Faith rather than Christian Science? It is easier for the human mind to take the route of mere faith because it requires less work. Who would not

Does not the concept of science mean that there are laws to be understood and practiced?

like to believe that all one has to do to heal is just implore the name of Deity and await the result? That's comforting and simplistic but it does not tell the whole story. This kind of healing is claimed to be a science for a reason, and the future of its practice relies on our willingness to accept the implications of dealing with it as a science.

Many may know that Mary Baker Eddy was a prolific healer throughout her life. While most of her more notable healing works came after her discovery of Christian Science, she did, nonetheless, heal before that discovery. Those healings were, by her own admission, accomplished by an abiding faith and conviction that God is the healer. Certainly that point did not change with her discovery of Christian Science but evidently that point alone was not the demand of God in addressing this human need for healing. The discovery of this healing method was not simply to reiterate that God is a healing power. That was, after all, the explanation of how Christian healing had taken place for centuries. The discovery of this healing method was based on recognition that there are divine laws that govern creation, and that as we come into accord with those laws, harmony in our everyday experience ensues.

Now, well mindful of the need to present this healing method in terms that all humanity can accept, I suggest that this healing method is more accurately stated as *Christian* than *spiritual* and that its future lies in the understanding and acceptance of its Christian roots. Certainly in a universal sense Christianity is more than sectarian and is rarely found in the denominational arguments that abound about it. But at the root of Christianity is the teaching and the practice of the Christ—the concept that there is a coincidence or agreement of the divine with the human. This coincidence that was so apparent in the life of Jesus is the divine power

behind effective Christian healing. To leave out or downplay the presence of the Christ in healing is eventually to risk losing one's healing effectiveness. All religions advance humanity in some fashion, but not all religions approximate the understanding of the Christ to promote scientific spiritual healing. In her sermon *Christian Healing* Mrs. Eddy makes this observation:

The difference between religions is that one religion has a more spiritual basis and tendency than the other; and the religion nearest right is that one. The genius of Christianity is works more than words; a calm and steadfast communion with God; a tumult on earth, — religious factions and prejudices arrayed against it, the synagogues as of old closed upon it, while it reasons with the storm, hurls the thunderbolt of truth, and stills the tempest of error; scourged and condemned at every advancing footstep, afterwards pardoned and adopted, but never seen amid the smoke of battle. (pp 1, 2)

**We will have to be loyal
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communion with God.**

Several concepts ring out from this statement. First is that healing is a calm and steadfast communion with God. I'm sure that you realize that being steadfast means "being fixed, firm, immovable"; it also means "loyal." In the coming decades of Christian healing, we are going to have to be loyal to the fact that this healing power comes from our communion with God, our wholehearted reliance on God. Reliance on God has a particular connotation. Turning to God means willingness to yield to the divine character, redemption, regeneration. Are those terms too religious for a growing secular society? They don't have to be if we know that they appeal to the very spirit of humanity to be better. This kind of healing has to do with change of thought, heart, character. We need to see that only the power of God can bring that desired result. If healing is something different from physical change, then we should not corrupt the process.

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIAN HEALING, CONCLUSION

The second point in that passage is that the genius of Christianity is a "tumult on earth." You know, my friends, there is no way of getting around that concept. Christianity is meant to shake things up. That can be fun or not, solely dependent on how we choose to engage the process. Making the human yield to the divine is what prayer is about; it is what the Christ mission is about. Assuming that one is going to slip these revolutionary concepts by the sentinels of material existence is just plain naïve. But this process of "tumult" does not have to be dreaded, escaped, or painful. One could look at it as a wonderful moment in history where a totally new concept takes hold.

The future of Christian healing will thrive in the understanding that ours is the task to move human consciousness from its reliance on matter or mortal thought to the acceptance of seeing the nature of God as Spirit and its spiritual creation. Every healing holds at its roots this wonderful tumult of rousing human thought "from material belief to the apprehension of spiritual ideas." Every healing promises to leave the world, as well as the patient, different from where it found it. No longer is the goal of healing to restore the material mechanism to normalcy, but in fact the goal is to discard the material mechanism all together for the reality of spiritual fact. We must be willing to fulfill our role to break out of the circle no matter how much tumult it involves, never even surmising that this process will go gently into the night. But eagerly and persuasively we must present the task of breaking "earth's stupid rest."

I have seen the regrowth of limbs where it was deemed impossible; the restoration of vision where the material organism had been destroyed; the natural development and growth of a child with no

gland to promote growth; the restoration of carious bones over twenty years decayed, all through the acceptance that not matter but spiritual idea constitutes substance and activity. The goal in these healings was to establish the true substance, not to restore an old sense of substance, matter, to its original form. Are we finding some kinds of healing resistant to our best efforts? Maybe we are not striking high enough. We need to strike for the greater purpose; in this I believe God is pleased. God's chosen have never been those who are funda-

mentally different from anyone else, just those who are more obedient. Mrs. Eddy's words are just as challenging to us today as they were in earlier times:

**God's chosen
have never been
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fundamentally
different from
everybody else,
just those
who are more
obedient.**

We are in the midst of a revolution; physics are yielding slowly to metaphysics; mortal mind rebels at its own boundaries; weary of matter, it would catch the meaning of Spirit.
(Christian Healing pg 11)

See to it, O Christian Scientists, ye who have named the name of Christ with a higher meaning, that you abide by your statements, and abound in Love and Truth, for unless you do this you are not demonstrating the

Science of metaphysical healing. The immeasurable Life and Love will occupy your affections, come nearer your hearts and into your homes when you touch but the hem of Truth's garment. (pg 16)

Ron Ballard, C.S.B.
April 27, 2003



In graduate school I studied to be a research biochemist. My focus was on the principles—the basic truths, laws, qualities and modes of action—of physics, chemistry, biology. Nowhere in my studies was I taught anything about love. Early in my study of Christian Science I was drawn to Mrs. Eddy's use of Principle as a synonym for God. Imagine my surprise when, in my study of Principle, I found an interesting fact.

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy equates Principle with Love, and without reference to any other synonym for God, at least 25 times. Principle is never paired with any of the other synonyms in a similar way. That recognition changed me. I began to learn that divine Principle—the basic truths, laws, qualities and modes of action—of all being, is identical to divine Love, and therefore being principled is identical to being loving, and *vice versa*. This was a big task for me, letting go of intellectual pride and human control and organization, and accepting instead the design and direction of Love. Christian Science nursing was God's method of leading me tenderly, but firmly, forward toward the understanding of how to love God and His children.

Love for God and man leads to the desire to serve; and when you think about it, it's more than a desire, it's the realization that what we call service is actually nothing more nor less than living our lives as the reflection of God, Love. What mankind calls serving is reducing to daily practice the love that inspired Christ Jesus' teaching, healing and his sacrifice on our behalf. Serving is reducing to practice the love that led Mary Baker Eddy to heal, teach, write *Science and Health*, and establish the Church we love, all in the face of criticism and persecution in public and private.

Reducing to practice—it's an idea from *Science and Health* (490:14), taken from this passage: "Human theories are helpless to make man harmonious or immortal, since he is so already, according to Christian Science. Our only need is to know this

and reduce to practice the real man's divine Principle, Love." You see the connection to Christian Science nursing. Often people think of nursing as an aid to making man harmonious. A nurse seems to work with human needs, meeting them in loving ways, to bring harmony to a discordant situation. But it is so much more effective in support of healing to realize that the only need, for the nurse and her patients, is to know that man is harmonious and immortal right here, right now, and to reduce divine Love to practice, to make Love known—heard, seen, and felt.

In the passage quoted, Mrs. Eddy didn't specifically refer to nurses; she said "our only need." We all need to realize that man is harmonious, and we all need to make divine Principle, Love practical in our daily lives. This idea is of vital importance. Christian Science nursing is one way in which Love is made practical in our church, and Fern Lodge plays an important role in nurturing the understanding and demonstration of Christian Science nursing.

Our hope is to help others recognize their own inherent nursing qualities so they can feel ready, able and willing to offer care for family, friends and fellow church members. Each one of you can support the broader mission of Fern Lodge and bring the blessing of the true understanding of nursing to mankind. Donations to Fern Lodge support this work. And although the cost comprises less than one percent of our operating expenses, these programs do much to help raise the standard of care in our churches and communities.

The board, staff and patients at Fern Lodge share the desire to demonstrate Christian Science, and we strive to "reduce to practice the real man's divine Principle, Love." We hope you will come to visit Fern Lodge. Just give us a call and schedule a time for a tour. We trust you will feel our dedication to the ministry of Christian Science nursing and our love for you, for our church and for our world, that today is so very much in need of care.

WE HOPE YOU'LL COME VISIT FERN LODGE



FAMILY AND FRIENDS ENJOY THE GARDENS

A display board set up at our Annual Meeting showed photographs of various scenes around the Fern Lodge buildings and grounds. The photos on this page and on the cover show two of these scenes, and we feel they give a glimpse of the beauty and grace of Fern Lodge. There's more to see here, and more importantly, there's an atmosphere of quiet joy and peace that can be felt by those who visit us. At the meeting we invited the audience to come for a visit, and we extend that invitation to each of you. Please call and let us know you are coming, and we'll arrange to give you a tour.

In Fern Lodge newsletters, *Science and Health*, refers to the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy.

FERN LODGE FOCUS — June 2003

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