

# ...and there was light.

Genesis 1:3

## *Fern Lodge Focus*

April 1991

Fern Lodge and Bible seminars, What's the connection? .....	2
Thank You Notes .....	2
CREATION: God's Doing & Man's Undoing A synopsis from the seminar by Connie Stricklin.....	3
Clearway Marching Gist .....	7



# Fern Lodge and Bible seminars, What's the connection?

In this *Focus* is a synopsis of a recent benefit talk given for Fern Lodge by Connie Stricklin, a Bible scholar from Massachusetts. Why do we sponsor Bible study programs? What do they have to do with Christian Science nursing?

Nursing manifests God's loving care for man. A nurse needs a deep and growing spiritual understanding of God to offer assistance that really supports someone who is praying for healing. Study of the inspired Word in the Scriptures helps us understand God and improves our Christian nursing.

Nurses need to seek God's guidance every day to know how best to serve. Mary Baker Eddy, in the first tenet of Christian Science, tells where Christian Scientists look for their guide, *As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life (Science and Health, 497:3)*. Connie Stricklin's development of Scriptural stories and ideas gives insight into the original meanings of the text.

## Thank You Notes

The following expressions of gratitude came from patients, families and friends. We share them because they bear witness to the healing Christ. We hope they inspire you as they do us.

"The following verse from Hymn 3 in the *Christian Science Hymnal* reflects our deep appreciation for the healing and loving care given at Fern Lodge:

*A grateful heart a garden is,  
Where there is always room  
For every lovely, God-like grace  
To come to perfect bloom.*

"We are grateful for the dedicated and loving service of your nurses and staff. The beautiful, peaceful and healing atmosphere at Fern Lodge is

These insights help us catch the spiritual, inspired message of the writers.

The Mother Church is giving fresh attention to the role of Christian Science nursing. One result is a commitment to nursing in people's homes, when possible, rather than in facilities. There is also a growing understanding that in many cases a person needing nursing can be helped at home by family and friends, instead of only by trained Christian Science nurses.

Wherever nursing is given, all involved need an abiding faith in God's grace and a dedication to Christian service. At Fern Lodge we are grateful that everyone manifests God's caring qualities. The Scriptures give valuable inspiration and lessons all can use. The Bible unfolds Christianity. A deeper Christianity helps us offer more inspired care for those we work with at home and in our churches.

We will continue to offer programs like the *Creation* and *John* benefits, trusting that they will enlighten the listeners and lead each of us to more inspired Christian Science nursing.

inspiring to patients, staff and visitors. It is truly evidence of divine Love in action!"

"Thank you for a lovely healing atmosphere. I love Fern Lodge! God is blessing you, and you are blessing all."

"I can't tell you how grateful I was when you said it was OK to have (a relative) there. I was so at ease — and she is so grateful. She got up on Sunday morning feeling so good and did not need to go to Fern Lodge."

*You will find more thank you notes on page 7.*

Fern Lodge • 18457 Madison Avenue  
Castro Valley, CA 94546 • (415) 886-2448



# CREATION: God's Doing & Man's Undoing

Connie Stricklin, our visiting Bible speaker, explained to an attentive audience that Genesis 1 (God's doing) and Genesis 2 and 3 (man's undoing) present two distinct accounts of creation from different vantage points. They are not properly understood as one continuous narrative of man's beginning right and then falling into sin.

The first account of creation sets forth the bringing into being, the genesis, of the ideas of God as creation by the Word. It is His grand design unfolding step by step in an ascending line of revelation. And it is a perfect work from start to finish. The second record looks through the eyes of mankind and sees the world as the arena of human history in which is played out the drama of God's revelation of Himself and of man's proper relation to Him. It deals with the contradictions of human existence and the yielding to God which leads to redemption.

When we refer to Genesis 1 we include part of Genesis 2:4 — *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created*. The break between Genesis 1 and 2 is an intrusion into the text added by later printers who divided the Bible into chapters and verses.

## God, the Creator

In Genesis 1 the Hebrew word for God is *Elohim*. This is not God's name so much as it is His nature, His activity as the Creator. *In the beginning God...* Here God is first in power, rank, authority, from all eternity — first in position, primacy and dominance, the only creative, causative ruling power.

This account presents creation as occurring "once and for all." It shows the irrevocable, permanent power of God, the understanding of which enabled Israel to break away from the mythological beliefs of other Middle Eastern cultures. The Hebrews' spiritual doctrine separated them from their heathen neighbors.

We should note that in Genesis 1 the heavenly bodies are called *lights*, not the sun and the moon. This word *lights* was chosen purposely in order to distinguish them from the physical astronomical bodies, which were worshiped and deified by the Egyptians and Babylonians. The Genesis 1 account of creation is not a story about the beginnings of the physical universe; it is an account of the spiritual facts of being.

The creation of the spiritual universe proceeds from God's own self-revelation. Each created classification — the firmament and the waters, the earth and the seas, the lights in the firmament of heaven, the plants and animals — is distinct and unique, and none of them exert control over the others.

## In the Image of God...

Man is created fundamentally different from the rest of the universe. Man has unique status. He is made in the image and likeness of the Creator, and he rules over nature. He has dominion over all creatures, but he remains responsible to God. No right of exploitation is implied by dominion, but a sacred responsibility to preserve the divine order is indicated. Man — male and female — is the trustee who is to maintain the nature of the spiritual universe exactly the way God created it. God supplies man with an inexhaustible abundance of spiritual ideas to nourish and sustain him. Man does not dominate, but he holds the divine creation intact, pure, and undefiled. Man is made in God's image, His own likeness, to show what God is like.

Sabbath, the seventh day at the end of creation, expresses God's deep satisfaction in the completion of His perfect work. Sabbath rest to the Hebrews was resting in the understanding that God's creation is wholly perfect, now and forever as in the beginning.



# CREATION: God's Doing & Man's Undoing

## But There Went Up A Mist...

While Genesis 1 is heaven-centered, a theological statement of faith that shows what creation is really like, the tale told in Genesis 2 and 3 is earth-centered and serves as a guide post for human living. The writer does not think of it as telling the facts of creation. Rather, this story tells what humankind thinks about God and man. It includes the false beliefs man has about God, presenting the Creator as very material and man-like. The story of creation beginning at Genesis 2:4 — *in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens*, — uses the personal name of God, *Yahweh*, i.e. the Lord. It is a deliberate attempt to show that what men think about creation is the opposite of what it really is. This account begins in a mist, which is symbolic of the mystification that results in an unclear notion of life and being.

Why do we have the second, inverted account of creation? Who needs it? We do! This creation story sets the stage for the progressive revelation of God's Word in the Old Testament and for the full effulgence of the Word in the New Testament. The Bible is the record of man's slowly unfolding understanding of what life is really all about, starting from a first faint gleam of light and culminating in its full revelation — the appearing of God's only-begotten Son, the light of the world. This is the Christ, which illumines our understanding of God and makes plain the relationship of man to God. The enlightenment of human thought begins with the second account of creation.

## The Man

We should note that Adam is not a person's name; he is not the first man. The word *Adam* means *the man* as mankind collectively and represents the unknown earliest ancestors of a people who were the first to worship the one God. Abraham and the patriarchs traced their ancestry as far back as they could remember, to a

man named *Seth*. They did not know Seth's ancestors, but they knew he had them. So this is the story of *the man* who preceded the family history of a people called Israel.

This family came from Ur of the Chaldees, a land in the Middle East that was well-watered and luxuriant and had everything that was needed for the people who lived there. It's the region we now know as southern Iraq and Kuwait. This is where the garden of Eden was.

*The tree of the knowledge of good and evil* in Genesis 2, verse 17, covers the whole range of human knowledge gained by means of the five physical senses. This tree is a symbol for earthly experience and sensual perception, which were not part of creation in Genesis 1. If you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or accept what appears through sensual perception, the end result is death. This is just a statement of fact; the text does not imply that it is a punishment. God in the Old Testament is not a wrathful, punishing God. Sin is its own punishment. Through disobedience you've done it to yourself. Right living and right acting are the key to life. If you want to live, be obedient to God's law.

As the story continues, God is supposed to ask for man's help. By naming the living creatures the man thinks he is acting as a kind of co-creator with God and that he is a free-will agent who does not need to obey God. He begins to try to take control away from God with disastrous results.

## The Woman

Let us note here that the phrase, *I will make an help meet for him* does not mean that woman is made to be man's helper or servant. The root of the Hebrew word for *help* is *to be strong*, and the root of *meet* is *to be equal*. The Hebrews understood that woman was a power equal to man. The words *bone of my bones, and flesh of*



*my flesh*, are an idiomatic expression meaning, *one of us, a close relative*. Equality of man and woman underlies the whole covenant code; women are not subordinate. We should also notice that *the woman* represents the collective female ancestors of the same people as *the man, Adam*; she is not named *Eve...the mother of all living*, until Genesis 3, verse 20, after the events in the garden of Eden.

In Genesis 3 the serpent appears out of nowhere, a shadowy form, having no real identity. The serpent is not a material life form at all in this story; the Hebrew word for serpent also stands for subliminal suggestion that disrupts the harmony between creator and man. This suggestion confuses the woman, breaks down her defenses with a big lie, saying that mankind can rebel against God and gain something through disobedience. But man really only has one choice. Man is not a free agent; he must obey God's commands. Righteousness has its rewards; unrighteousness has its punishment.

### Temptation

There is no such thing as a real serpent talking to the woman. The woman is looking at the tree of knowledge in the garden, and she is talking to herself, trying to reason it all out. Hypnotic suggestion says to her, "What's wrong with this, why can't I do this thing?" Evil suggestions always disguise themselves as our own thoughts. The woman leaves the protection and security of divine Providence to strike out on her own to satisfy the suggested desire, and self-will takes the place of God's will. She thinks she wants to do her own thing. The temptations that confront the woman are materialism, sensualism, and intellectualism. All the world's problems are covered by these serpent-arguments.

Why did the woman do it? Her very innocence made her vulnerable to the suggestion here. If she had been less naive and Adam less

self-righteous, they would have been more spiritually aware. If they had been aware of the nature of evil, they would not have been duped. Here is an important lesson. We can't afford to be too innocent — to be ignorant of evil's influence on thought. We have to learn to resist evil and obey God.

Why did the serpent concentrate his efforts against the woman? It is the nature of woman to be moral and pure. The morals of a family, of a nation, even the morals of mankind in general, can only be debased by degrading the moral standards of womanhood. When woman succumbs to sensualism and lust, the moral fabric of society is torn to shreds. When woman upholds what is decent and pure, then the moral fabric of society is preserved.

When the woman gave him the fruit, Adam didn't even try to resist. He didn't argue with himself or consider God's command not to eat of it. He already felt he was a co-creator, that he had a right to do just as he pleased without being answerable to any other authority. Later Adam put the blame for his sin on God and on his wife. "*The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she made me do it.*"

But the woman answers very perceptively. She realizes at once she has been fooled, and she acknowledges her guilt. She made the wrong choice not defiantly, and not willingly as Adam did, but ignorantly. And she grew up in a hurry. Her betrayal by Adam brought her abruptly into the world of experience — a rude awakening.

### And the Consequences

In the Bible sin is rebellion against God, and sinning against God has consequences. Child-bearing becomes painful from the accumulated wrong-doing of mankind. The subjugation of the female sex to the male is the inevitable result of the process set in motion by the woman's



# CREATION: God's Doing & Man's Undoing

seduction through sensual perception and materialism. When woman gives in to lust and sensualism, she becomes the object of exploitation. Domination by her husband was part of Eve's punishment. Originally Adam and Eve were equal; now she becomes unequal, inferior, as a consequence of sin.

Adam's punishment was loss of the heavenly blessing of the Father. Adam was not to have *dominion ... over all the earth*. Henceforth man is to be a slave to the earth. Earth is no longer fruitful and abundant, and man must make his own way by the sweat of his brow. But remember, this is not the man God made in His image and likeness, not man who was given dominion over the earth and its residents. The man who sinned and is punished never was given dominion over the earth.

Remember, too, death is not God's punishment for the transgression of His laws; rather it is the end result of the downward slide triggered by that initial giving in to temptations. Neither the man nor the woman was at anytime cursed by God. There is always the possibility of repentance and redemption.

The second story of creation in Genesis introduces a sense of disruption and disorder. Chaos has taken the place of harmony. But it is not a permanent break from the *...and, behold, it was very good*, of Genesis 1. The discord that began with the tale in Genesis 2 and 3 is only a temporary condition, out of which man works his way throughout Bible history. The lesson is to repent, turn away from a personal sense of creation and from sensual perceptions and experiences.

## God, the Redeemer

Though it presents a tale of man's disobedience and the consequences of sin, the second creation account also contains a precious

insight into the relations of God and man. Notice God's love being manifest, even after the punishment is set forth — what Adam and Eve will have to go through as a result of disobeying God's sacred commandments. We read in Genesis 3, *Unto Adam also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them*. This is one of the most precious nuggets in the whole narrative. Even in the face of Adam's intransigence and Eve's self-will, God never disowns His own children. He never ceases to love them and to care for them, to protect and watch over them. He cherishes them and clothes them, thus taking away their shame and reproach and forgiving their sin. So right here in the account of the effects of rebellion and self-will, we find the revelation of a new understanding of God — his nature as the Redeemer which becomes increasingly important in the prophetic writings of the Bible. The Creator of man is also the Preserver of man.

## Man's Progress

So, we've said, "Do we need the second and third chapters of Genesis?" From those two chapters we gain insight into the nature of mental suggestion, and we learn the punishment that accompanies sin. We also see how much God loves us and takes care of us, in spite of what we do. If we just had the account in Genesis 1, we might not have that understanding of God here and now in our daily lives. The Bible places mankind, with his efforts to be in a right relation with God, in a covenant relation with Him. This relationship of mutual promise began with his chosen people, and through them it spread to the entire world. That progress culminated in the clearest evidence of God's love for man, His sending of His only-begotten son, Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh, the appearing of that Spirit of truth which was fully revealed as the light of the world. For God said, *Let there be light: and there was light*.



# Clearway Matching Gift

We are grateful for a generous gift from Clearway Foundation of Newport Beach, CA, a non-profit organization founded by Christian Scientists. A Clearway publication states that the Foundation provides "central funding for existing Christian Science care facilities... to help eliminate high-interest mortgages, (and) to provide funds for much-needed benevolence." The Clearway brochure includes the following sentiment we share at Fern Lodge: "In no way is Clearway Foundation intended to take the place of your contributions to The Mother Church, your branch church, or your favorite Christian Science care facility."

Last December, Clearway offered to match \$25,000 in donations given to Fern Lodge for benevolence. By late January we received more than that sum in benevolence gifts from our many supporters. In March Clearway sent \$25,000 to match the donations. We thank each one of you who gave to Fern Lodge, and we're sure you join us in thanking Clearway for doubling these generous gifts.

Fern Lodge gives about \$23,000 in benevolence each month. The Clearway grant provided funds at a time when other donations did not cover monthly benevolence. This gracious gift met one month's benevolence. Donations are still needed to aid patients here.

## Thank You Notes — continued

"I found this little poem... in Boston... several years ago.

*God is the only employer;  
Said a sweet voice, I know not from whence;  
And work is divine Expression,  
And infinite Love — Recompense.*

"Today it is so perfect for all of you, who patiently and lovingly cared for me during my recent stay at Fern Lodge. I am so very grateful — and how I loved the sweet peas!! I am so grateful to be back serving in our Reading Room."

"I want you to know we appreciate the fine care, love, kindness and understanding that the people at Fern Lodge gave."

"I wish to express my gratitude for receiving copies of *Fern Lodge Focus*. I look forward to reading them from cover to cover, especially the articles on nursing. Many times the message has served as a guiding light for me in my work with (a relative) who, too, needs special care (and) is very receptive to God's loving care. Thanks for sharing."

"Mom and I want to thank you so very much for arranging for and overseeing the nurses who came to help. (They) were excellent, and Mom enjoyed them and felt well cared for. It was so wonderful knowing that everyone who came was not only experienced, dependable and trustworthy, but the fact that each gave so much metaphysical support was all important."

"Our gratitude overflows to God for His loving care. Fern Lodge is indeed a part of this gratitude. Thank you so much, each of you, for your part in this healing. My family and I felt and appreciated the uplifting atmosphere and tender care expressed by all. We saw the embodiment of Mrs. Eddy's description of a nurse found on page 395 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. There was so much expectancy of good, that there was no other option but to see the 'revealing' of my true status as God's perfect idea, never touched by a dream."

You may have noticed that there is no donation envelope in this issue. We have replaced it with a seed packet filled with inspiring thoughts we use daily at Fern Lodge.

We share these seeds in gratitude to God for the generous support we have received from many friends over the years.





If you missed Connie Stricklin's Bible program, **CREATION: God's Doing and Man's Undoing**, or if you enjoyed it so much you would like to hear it again, cassette tapes are available for purchase through the Olive Branch.

Contact Jade and Roger Gibson: 11469 Clayton Road • San Jose, CA 95127-5007  
(800) 748-6322 or (408) 259-4491.

## Fern Lodge Focus

18457 Madison Avenue  
Castro Valley, CA 94546-1699

address correction requested

*[Handwritten signature]*  
*[Handwritten initials]*

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Hayward, CA  
Permit No. 798

You may have noticed that there is no donation envelope in this issue. We have replaced it with a seed packet filled with inspiring thoughts we use daily at Fern Lodge.

We share these seeds in gratitude to God for the generous support we have received from many friends over the years.