

## FERN LODGE FOCUS — AUGUST 2011

The new Fern Lodge entrance building project is nearing completion, and our fall **Focus** will have photos. This issue features a report from the Fern Lodge annual meeting last spring, including the complete text of the inspiring talk, “Living Eternal Life,” by Susan Breuer, C.S. Inside you will hear from two dedicated volunteer readers and also from a Principia College student who has been very helpful as an intern this summer.

The Fern Lodge Board of Directors is glad to announce plans to expand the Fern Lodge Christian Science Nursing Education Program. We are preparing to offer education and experience to dedicated and inspired Christian Scientists who feel called to serve through the ministry of Christian Science nursing, wherever they may be. Fern Lodge already has been actively teaching individuals in a private home, sharing Christian Science nursing workshops in branch churches, and conducting a course in Argentina. We look forward to building on these experiences. The November issue of the **Focus** will include a thorough update.

We are grateful to the faithful donors who provide financial support to enable us to continue our progress!

With heart-felt thanks,  
*George Strong*, Administrator

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### THE HEALING MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING AT FERN LODGE

— FROM SHARON STRONG, DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

When you arrive at Fern Lodge, you feel a sense of peace that characterizes the healing activity of the Christ. This peaceful feeling is the result of the diligent work of the Fern Lodge staff. Each staff member strives to contribute to our healing ministry. In the *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy* series, John Lathrop attributes to Mary Baker Eddy these words of encouragement, which we take to heart: “Never become discouraged, dear ones. This work is not hum-drum, it is growth. It is repeating and defeating, repeating and defeating, repeating and defeating” (First Series, p. 14 or Full Edition, p. 113). The result of this work is Christian Science healing.

When individuals come to Fern Lodge for healing, we give them the third degree! ☺ I’m referring to Mrs. Eddy’s scientific translation of mortal mind found on page 115 & 116 of *Science and Health*. At times it can seem like a Christian Science nurse is fully engaged in the second degree, practicing the moral qualities of “Humanity, honesty, affection, compassion, hope, faith, meekness, temperance.” And that seems good and unselfish, —nurses should express those qualities, shouldn’t they?

We might be tempted to believe that we apply those qualities to overcome the first degree—the depravity of matter or the physical realm—to “Evil beliefs, passions and appetites, fear, depraved will, self-justification, pride, envy, deceit, hatred, revenge, sin, sickness, disease, death.” If not alert, the Christian Science nurse might get caught up with the physical aspects of care—the tending of the body—seeking only the compassion, hope, faith, meekness, etc. of the second degree. We could lose the deep healing significance of Christian Science nursing if we leave our practice there, as benevolent as that seems.

But the fact is, we are not “second degree” nurses helping patients with their “first degree” problems. Instead, we need to identify our nursing practice as founded in the “third degree” which Mrs. Eddy defines

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## WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS! — MEET TWO OF OUR READERS

We are so grateful to have a group of great volunteers this year, and we are especially grateful to all who help us with our Church services. Their dedication and their heart and soul offerings bring so much meaning to the healing atmosphere. It's something the guests comment on quite frequently, —the fresh inspiration and feeling of Love they experience with our volunteer readers especially.

Pictured here is a dear and long-time friend of Fern Lodge, **Anna Lisa Kronman**. Anna Lisa is a Christian Science practitioner in Orinda, and she comes to read for Testimony Meetings at Fern Lodge. Everyone at Fern Lodge is deeply grateful for her metaphysical clarity, spiritual insights and tender care.



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Another volunteer shared thoughts about his experiences at Fern Lodge. **David Long** reads for our testimony meetings and also occasionally plays piano for a Hymn Sing. We love how he speaks from his heart! Mrs. Eddy says, “When the heart speaks, however simple the words, it’s language is always acceptable to those who have hearts” (*Miscellaneous Writings*, page 262). David wrote:

“The idea of visiting Fern Lodge first came to me after praying to our Father-Mother Soul, to show me my church-work calling. I had been thinking for some time that I wanted to do something tangible. When the idea came, I felt a quiet confidence that it was right, and I just drove over.

My love and appreciation of Christian Science nurses and nursing facilities has grown immensely over the years. To me, Fern Lodge is among the most important institutions of the world. When the heart is yearning to be healed spiritually, what an amazing thing it is to find places dedicated to that purpose, —and with practical support! Ah, heaven!

What feels most meaningful to me, specifically about Fern Lodge, are two things. One is the genuine, heart-to-heart, illuminating, and friendly conversations I’ve had with both residents and the staff. And this includes the gentle “non-conversations” —when verbal communication does not appear possible because of a patient’s condition— their qualities speak louder than words.

Second, I love the casual, roll-with-it, forgiving spirit that’s woven into everything that happens there. It feels like home, where everything might not appear perfectly in place, until we look with softer eyes and see, well, as a matter of fact, everything is just as it should be.

One of the blessings I get from volunteering at Fern Lodge is feeling calm and purposeful. We all have a feeling that our natural calling is to be useful, to do a little more than the insecure mortal ego thinks is possible. When I ignore the discouraging voices and take even one step in the right direction, the world slows down, and I am reminded that I have the power to do more. In short, by volunteering, I simply find I am in my right mind, and that I am being myself.”

## MEET TONY, A SUMMER INTERN FROM PRINCIPIA COLLEGE

My name is Anthony Ackah-Nyanzu. I come from Ghana, and I now live in Elsah, Illinois, attending Principia College. I will be starting my junior year this coming fall with a double major in Computer Science and Economics.

It was the Spring quarter, and as usual I had to decide where I was going to be for the summer. I initially had two places in mind. I was either going to work for The Mother Church or to work for a Christian Science nursing home. For a while I have wanted to work at a Christian Science nursing facility, but I was unsure if it was the right thing for me. Halfway through the quarter there was a job fair at Principia. I first visited the Mother Church booth, and talked with them about a possible internship. After that I went to the Fern Lodge booth to talk about nursing.

I met Brian Stock, and he told me about Fern Lodge. He talked about Christian Science nursing training at Fern Lodge and then about an internship to work in the office for the summer. Right away I knew that doing that internship was the right thing for me. It would give me experience related to my fields of study, but more importantly would help me to decide whether Christian Science nursing was the right thing for me.

While I have been at Fern Lodge I have been working on digitizing historic photos and uploading them on the Fern Lodge website. Some are already fading, so I add color and light to them so that they look as they were originally. I have also participated in taking the guests here on walks and reading the Lesson, Christian Science Monitor, and other Christian Science literature. Being able to do these things with the guests makes my time here worthwhile and enjoyable. I love to go on walks, so being able to take someone with me makes me definitely like to work here.



WALKING WITH A PATIENT



HILDA, OUR BREAKFAST COOK, AND TONY

I am in my third room while I have been here, but every move has been to a better room. I totally like where I am now. I like the food, and the people that I have met here. I wake up in the morning, have breakfast while hanging out with the one making breakfast and then come to work. I work on the photos, help with computers, or do anything I need to do in the office, and then it is time for the walk. ☺

In short, I am enjoying my summer. I am glad I came to Fern Lodge. The warm welcome I have received here, from the people to the services in general, have made it clear to me that Christian Science nursing is something that I would be interested in doing, at least while I am in school. I would definitely consider Fern Lodge for my nursing class if it is available next summer.

Thank you,

Tony

## THE HEALING MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING, CONCLUSION

as “understanding.” This degree is spiritual, and involves “Wisdom, purity, spiritual understanding, spiritual power, love, health, holiness.” She continues, “In the third degree mortal mind disappears, and man as God’s image appears.” It’s so important that we begin with the scientific translation of immortal Mind, —God— and constantly see man as God’s individual, spiritual, perfect, eternal idea, held securely in Mind. Then no matter what the physical or mental picture, we can acknowledge that our patients are eternally safe and cared for by Father-Mother God. And as we do this, we find we are working in the third degree, and seeing more healing and wholeness.

Mrs. Eddy once said to her household: “Our work is not to change God’s work, for that is finished and perfect. Neither is it to make error nothing, for it is that already; but to stand (apparently) in the midst of it, unmoved, knowing its nothingness.”

This last year we saw many evidences of grace manifested in the lives of patients and staff. Noticeable freedom was gained and progress made by those whose healings seem to be protracted. We watched as fear and discouragement were conquered and limitation was overcome in many ways.

*It’s so important that we begin with the scientific translation of immortal Mind, —God— and constantly see man as God’s individual, spiritual, perfect, eternal idea...*

A patient arrived unable to walk and experiencing pain and weakness on one side.

At odd moments she would just cry. Through her prayerful study to learn more about God, and the daily support of a Christian Science practitioner, in a few months, she was walking unassisted and left to live in an apartment. She wept when she left, only this time tears of joy for the wonderful healing. She told me that she never realized before this experience what it meant to be “working” in Christian Science.

Another patient came to us after a fall. Skilled handling and great alertness were required of the nurses, as they witnessed her innate perfection. After 10 weeks of study, prayer, and progress she went home, using only a cane for balance. She said, “The nurses were very accommodating to my unique needs. The total response of everybody—the gardener, cooks, staff—was darling: they all were so loving and caring!” This experience reassured her husband, who was not a Christian Scientist, and who had wanted her to receive medical care.

On hearing that patient’s news about going home, another patient said, “I’m going home too!” And two weeks later she did. She told me that before this experience, she didn’t really know what Christian Science nurses “did,” and now she was in awe of all the love, encouragement, and excellent care we provided in support of her healing. “I never knew you did all of this, and so joyously,” she said. Since she’s been home, she has cooked dinner every night, and does her own laundry and housekeeping.

As I reflected recently on the healing mission of Fern Lodge, the words of Mrs. Eddy’s “Communion Hymn” came in the form of an acknowledgement, as this paraphrase: “Yes, we have seen the Savior! Yes, we have heard the glad sound! Yes, we have felt the power of the Word! The Truth has made us free, and Love has wiped away our tears. Spirit has cleansed the foul senses, has made us pure, has cured all our sorrow, sickness, and sin. Yes, Life is the Strongest deliverer, and the recognition of the ever-present Christ has made us whole.”

Thank you so much for your support of Christian Science nursing. Wherever in the world it is practiced, we all share one common purpose: Christian Science healing.

Sharon Strong  
Director of Christian Science Nursing

## **Living Eternal Life**

A talk by Susan Breuer, given for the Fern Lodge Annual Meeting, May 15, 2011

Thank you for that nice introduction Sharon. As Sharon mentioned I have experienced first hand the healing comfort of Christian Science Nursing, and I'm grateful to Fern Lodge, which provides this care with love and dedication. I found this quote by Helen Keller, the famous humanitarian who was both blind and deaf; she described faith as "a vision of Good one cherishes, and the enthusiasm that pushes one to seek its fulfillment - regardless of obstacles."

Aren't we fortunate to have Fern Lodge where a vision of Good is cherished? These dedicated workers unite in spirit, passion and devotion to make it a wonderful place of refuge and healing "regardless of obstacles." They are joined in their love for God, a commitment to the cause of Christian Science, and a desire to serve their fellow man...and we thank you!

Look around...it seems everyone is spending their time and money in an endless search to find ways to be healthy, look like a top model or perform like an Olympic athlete. We've all browsed the internet or listened to a conversation behind us in the grocery store and heard about lotions, drugs, foods and the latest surgical procedures... described in minute detail... to help us extend and beautify our lives in matter...their promises are always to keep us all fresh and alive in matter.

Well, for those who are convinced that Life is God and that Life is Love this is an exercise in futility. Putting thought and energy into material solutions never helps us to find the tree of Life. So today I'll talk about the enduring, permanent, unfailing, unending, everlasting, abiding nature of life that is God.

I have divided my talk into five parts. First, we will plant the roots of the tree of Life in the soil of the Bible, then we'll make it practical...do a little pruning, run a race, and finally...salvation.

So let's start with the Bible. The idea of living eternal Life is something Jesus talked about a couple of thousand years ago. The book of John tells of a day when Jesus traveled all morning, and stopped by a well to rest from the hot midday sun. Standing and drawing water at the well was a local Samaritan woman. He struck up a conversation with her by requesting something ...could she give him a drink of water? The woman was surprised by this request because "...the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (KJ John 4) Thus began a seminal conversation between the two.

Jesus gently roused the woman by saying "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living waters" (New American Standard). Now, it's obvious that Jesus wasn't referring to today's latest energy beverage or a caffeinated, electrolyte-enhanced liquid. No, what he had to offer would quench a deeper thirst. He could give her a truer sense of Life.

This new awareness of the enduring, unfailing, and abiding nature of Life results in a paradigm shift in how we see our prospects and ourselves. It breaks a limited sense of things wide open and we discover that we are forever, spiritual...God's beloved child. All the 278 different energy drinks on the market in an 8 ounce 16 ounce or even 2 liter bottle cannot give you taste of Life that is God...the Life that is Love.

Was this meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman just a friendly chat or was it heaven-sent? Did Jesus detect some sort of receptivity in her thought? In the course of their conversation, he pointed out that he knew she had been married five times and was working on the sixth. So, considering her track record, it's clear that to receive a better understanding of life we don't have to have a perfect past...that's a relief... only a desire to clean up the present with some new information.

Jesus said, "whoso drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (KJ John 4)

What a beautiful image... an infinity pool of Life. This stands in stark contrast to the limited mortal sense of things. All around us we are presented with a picture of life as a march to an untimely end, telling you that the present, which used to be your future, will very soon be your past.

On the other hand, you don't march through eternal life, you express it. You don't march to it or through it...you express it. God, Spirit, is right now, supplying all wisdom, power, and strength sufficient for your every need. "In Him you live and move and have your being." (Act 17) This is the life that you are to demonstrate. This is the life that is yours to live.

So the merry-go-round of searches stops with a satisfying drink of Truth. The truth that there is one Life and that Life is Life eternal, and that Life is our Life. There is no such thing as "dying in the Lord" but LIVING. There is no "other life". You are presently spiritual because you are eternally spiritual and every step heavenward helps now.

Mrs. Eddy has a poem in the beginning of *Miscellaneous Writings* that goes in part:

*If worlds were formed by matter,  
And mankind from the dust;  
Till time shall end more timely,  
There's nothing here to trust...*

*...Nothing have we gained therefrom,  
And nothing have to pray:*

*...My world has sprung from Spirit...  
In everlasting day;*

“My world has sprung from Spirit...”

All of us are engaged in the greatest of adventures...living eternal Life...practicing the presence of God. We spring from Spirit. We don't have to earn it, deserve it or die to receive it. The more we express Life, the more we realize its presence. This brings us around to the second part of my talk...the practical nature of truth.

About a year ago, a mole that had been located on my neck since childhood appeared to be growing larger. At first I ignored it or made a halfway attempt to not be afraid. But pretty soon, it had grown so big that it began interfering with the jewelry and clothing that I wore.

This problem brought with it all the fears and predictions that might cross one's mind. “Boy this could lead to something bad” and “people have things like this checked out.”

Now, the purpose of Christian Science practice is not to create, fix, construct, repair, change or alter anything. It is to understand that everything real exists now, and is right now forever present, complete and perfect. This is the Truth that removes the shadows of those material predictions, assumptions, and beliefs. Our understanding of God makes the problem impossible.

During this time I had a full plate of responsibilities calling out for my attention and it didn't seem right to put everything on hold, but I knew that I couldn't keep ignoring the problem. So I prayed. The first idea that came to thought was since I was spiritual it didn't make sense that something material could attach itself to my spiritual identity. It was ridiculous to think that any part of my thought could grow matter. With this in mind, I decided that every time I would catch a glimpse in the mirror or become worried or fearful I would turn to God and see the truth of how I was made. I would remind myself that I was spiritual and created in His image and likeness, and the belief that life is in and of matter was no part of the equation. If it wasn't part of God it wasn't part me. And I could know all this with an “abiding conviction”!

That was it...no long petitions and prayers just simple honest acknowledgements of God's presence and power. A few weeks after I started my thought patrol my husband and I went on a vacation. That first night I remember surrendering every activity including the physical problem to God. I felt all sense of human effort and strain drain away. In a few days the problem mole started to become unattached from its location and two days later it fell off. The mole that had been there since childhood left without leaving a trace or mark. This showed that the problem was only an illusion of mortal mind and had never been part of my true identity. My husband who's a wonderful Christian Scientist saw this whole thing take place and afterward looked at me and said “wow”.

If you are facing a challenge and think, “I am going to sit down and really pray about this all afternoon, next week, next month, right after I finish this letter, job, dinner... Well here is a bit of advice Mary Baker Eddy gave to Edward Kimball:

“Just wake up! And see your real self ten minutes, or one minute... God will keep you from falling. You can’t go down. He has given His angels charge over you; they (true thoughts) will hold you up, and you cannot dash your foot against a stone. Only let these [angel] thoughts hold sway over you.”  
(*Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer* amplified edition p. 393)

An additional note about this healing...I was writing this paper and I had a call from a patient on something totally unrelated. In the course of our conversation I read to her part of the talk that included this healing. The next morning I was surprised to receive the following email from her.

*Dear Susan,  
I wanted to share a healing that took place yesterday. A small growth appeared on my lower left eyelid several months ago. I would pray about it every time I washed my face and put makeup on. When you read me your paper with the healing of the growth on your neck, the part that stood out to me was “matter cannot attach itself to a spiritual idea.” Immediately, I accepted this truth. Last night after washing my face, I noticed the growth was gone! And she added...what additional confidence this gave me.... I was awake for part of the night expressing gratitude and continuing in prayer.*

Christian Science healing is accepting Truth into consciousness and when you do the need is met. The only thing left is to stand back and watch the glory of God unfold as your experience.

It is our prerogative to have a life that is the experience of beauty instead of ashes, lightness instead of burden, and joy instead of mourning. Mentally free yourself from all the limits of a mortal sense of life and demonstrate your unbreakable connection with your Creator, divine Love. God, the great I AM, and man the AM in this perfect equation of Life. You are spiritual right now so there is no need to carry around a material concept of yourself all day. So, unburden yourself.

Speaking of unburdening, I saw this catchy note on a church bulletin board recently:

*Good morning, this is God  
I will be handling all your problems today  
I will not need your help  
So enjoy your day  
Love, God.*

So if you feel burdened or seem to have you lost sight of your spiritual selfhood go back to that first chapter in Genesis. Remember you are that man, that woman of God’s creating-an individual instance of ageless being. Realize your grandeur.

Which brings us to the next part of our talk...the pruning part.  
Your grandeur makes you a spiritual classic, not a relic of the past. Just as we trim a tree, we prune the deadwood from thought. This allows us to see more of what’s present and makes room for spiritual

growth. So lose those hard feelings, contentious opinions, and little resentments that cloud and obscure your divine view. You will find your sense of heaven increasing in proportion to their removal. Some of these shopworn thoughts have been hanging around so long you may not even realize they are still there.

Here's an example of what I mean. When I was a young woman, living in Washington DC, I was invited to a beautiful mansion for a dinner party that a talented acquaintance was throwing. She had just returned from France, having spent a week living at a world-renowned chef's home, in order to acquire the finer points of French cooking. All of us were thrilled to be the first beneficiaries of her new skills. The ten of us were ushered into a large magnificent dining room where we sat down to a gourmet dinner. But, while I was enjoying the meal, I noticed upended and leaning against the wall in the far corner of the room a great big, used mattress. Of course no one wanted to embarrass our hostess, so the mattress in the room was never brought up. Although I never did find out why this old mattress was sharing dinner with us, I do have a theory. This mattress had been there so long, no one saw it any more. The irony is I don't remember one thing I ate that night...but I've never forgotten that mattress!

The mattress is a symbol for me of how you can get so used to seeing or believing something that it just becomes part of the life landscape. An old used mattress in a formal dining room seems like it would be pretty obvious, which leads one to think that it is quite possible that we might have a few mattresses of our own lying around...mental mattresses! Things like old injustices, worn-out opinions, and a few "well, that's how I do it" lying up-ended in a mental corner. So, don't forget...like any old mattress you can drag them out back or take them to the dump. You are not a haunted house and there is no reason to hang out with these ghosts of the past. Man's future is not in the past and neither is his present, so freshen things up and beautify the landscape!

Mrs. Eddy says in *Retrospection and Introspection* "the human history needs to be revised and the material record expunged." (page 22). Our human history needs to be revised or in other words, "reconsidered or altered in the light of new information" (online dictionary) and the material record expunged or "erased or removed completely" (online dictionary).

But you do have to be willing... Be willing, be open, be receptive to Truth; expect good all the time. And with a bit of pruning you can liberate yourself from the thoughts that are holding you back or slowing you down.

I did a little pruning myself the other day. A friend said something to me that was unkind and done in an attempt to ease her own pain by inflicting a bit on me. The words hit the mark and I felt the sting. A few days afterward, I was walking my dog and the whole incident flooded back. I found myself reliving the experience and feeling again the sting of those words. Suddenly it occurred to me, maybe this person wounded me the first time, but who was doing the wounding the second? By reliving the incident wasn't I the one doing the stabbing? Maybe it was time to let the whole thing go. Maybe it was time to redeem this experience through divine Love...remembering if God didn't

say it hadn't been said. After this realization the whole experience just left me. Even though the person later made amends it didn't matter...I was already amended.

The history of error cannot root itself in our spiritual identity. You don't need to uproot the past, just don't give it a permanent foothold. And keep at it.

Practicing the presence of God doesn't mean that you will soon become translucent and float through a boring, vapid existence. Which reminds me of on my favorite Farside cartoon. It pictures a man sitting quietly on a floating cloud with his little halo and wings...obviously in heaven...and the caption reads, "Gee I wish I'd brought a book". We need to get away from the sense that eternal life is floating on a cloud or is some kind of a Disneyland that we will visit in the future.

You don't have to go anywhere to find God. The one God, one Lord, has not split His creation into two camps with a great divide between them. Only so-called material life has a beginning and end, states and stages, and time limits of all kinds: too young, too old, too early, or too late. But, Good, God, is indivisible. It is not divided but reflected by all in infinite measure. Each and every day provides us with more opportunities to live and demonstrate an undivided sense of life in God. Ours is a living faith.

Nobody can die out of Love...no one has ever died out of God, good. Take yourself off a timeline and express your eternity. We begin with running daily the "race that is set before us." (Heb 12)

Which happens to be the next part of my talk: I have a friend, now in his mid 80's, who still runs the San Francisco marathon each year. He has some pretty interesting observations about his undivided sense of God and of Spirit as filling all space. Here are some of his thoughts:

*When I go on a long run I try to keep focused on the truth that myself and each of the other runners and all the trees, houses, cross streets, and other things we pass along the route (being spiritual) are filling all of the same real space, Spirit. We are actually already at the finish line as well as at the starting line and everywhere in-between. All that I and the other runners are actually doing is changing our focus from the things we see at the starting line, step-by-step to what we see along the way, and finally to what we see at the finish line.*

*The reason that little kids can run with such delight on the playground without practicing or training is that they have not accumulated in their human thought all the little foxes of criticism, resentment, worry, anger, fear, etc. that we adults tend to retain in our unconscious thought or in our active memory. These little glitches interrupt our smooth switching of focus to where we struggle to move our legs as fast as we used to go. To human sense this is the effect of age and of not enough daily training and practice.*

*But, Jesus didn't have to practice walking on the water. He didn't have to start out walking on top of a mud puddle, then on a calm pond, and finally on a stormy sea. But he did have to practice holding to the truth of what God is already doing and always maintaining...right now.*

*Sometimes when I come to a large hill, I think, "Oh, I will now have to struggle to climb the hill." At other times I get lost in my thoughts and then suddenly realize, "Oh, how wonderful, I just climbed that steep hill without realizing it!"*

From Hebrews 12: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

We've been talking about running a race, so end let's end today by discussing the finish line...salvation. The mission of Christian Science is to deliver, liberate, and redeem. We live salvation ...we don't put it off for another time or another place. Here's an example:

A young man came in to the Reading Room while I was on duty. He was living at a nearby halfway house while he was turning his life around. He asked two questions, "are Christian Scientist's saved?" and "What do you believe about salvation?"

I had just read the current *Christian Science Sentinel* (March 2003), which was devoted to the 91st Psalm and contained the testimony of a soldier who had prayed his way out of a life-threatening predicament. I asked the young man if I could read him something to answer his question, and he agreed. As many of you know, this psalm describes protection from all sorts of things —the fear of the night, pestilence, disease, and accident— and assures us that God sends his angels to bear us up.

The soldier's testimony describes an incident, which happened during parachute training. Since it was military parachuting, there were no ripcords, just static lines that opened the chutes automatically with men jumping out both sides of the plane. There were very gusty wind conditions that day and this soldier was the last man to go. As he jumped, a gust of wind hit the aircraft and moved it sideways. As a result, instead of being a safe distance away from the fellow who jumped before him, he was positioned 3-4 feet directly above him. Before any adjustment could be made, the parachute of the airman below opened and our soldier went feet first right through his open chute. This collapsed the chute and the two sets of riggings became entangled. Both of them were now hurling towards the ground in a free-fall from 800 feet...going 70 miles an hour.

As our soldier was falling he looked down and saw a khaki colored vehicle with a big red cross on the top racing toward the drop zone where they were going to hit. He said, "For the first time in my life there was absolutely nothing I could humanly do for myself. The words of the 91st psalm came to me and I remember consciously saying, 'All right, God, it's up to you, because there is nothing I can do'...just a complete giving over the situation to God."

At this point in the story I turned to the young man standing next to me in the Reading Room and I said, “when do you think this man is praying for his salvation...before or after he hits the ground?” He looked thoughtful for a moment and answered “before”. I said, this is the Christian Science idea of salvation. You don’t have to die to achieve it... you can have it right now and prove God’s presence and power in your life.

Here is how our soldier’s story ends:

“I hit the ground, took a bit of a roll, and bounced up about ten feet into the air and landed sprawled all over the place. We had fallen so fast we had beaten the man who had jumped 18 seconds before us...by 10 seconds. Before the guys on the ground could get to me I was on my feet. And the other guy was OK as well. We both got up and walked away . . . the guys on the ground couldn’t believe it. The ambulance crew shook their heads in disbelief.”

With the true idea of God, “all things are possible”.

So what are we waiting for? We can prove every day that we are living eternal Life

Susan Breuer, C.S.



At Fern Lodge we deeply appreciate the healing work of Susan Breuer, C.S., from San Mateo, CA. We are grateful to have had opportunities to work closely with her, and we all are uplifted by her joy, as well as her clear spiritual inspiration. Susan gave this talk at the 2011 Fern Lodge Annual Meeting, and those who attended told us of the inspiration they gained from hearing it.

Fern Lodge extends heart-felt gratitude to Susan for giving permission for her talk to be reprinted and shared in its entirety. We are sure you will enjoy it.