

In this *Focus* you will find excerpts from the talks given at Fern Lodge's Annual Meeting and an invitation to a Bible seminar by Mary Jane Chapin on the *Sermon on the Mount*.

The joy of Christian Science nursing — Pat Alvarez

I'd like to impart to you a sense of the joy of Christian Science nursing. I was inspired by a Bible verse we recently used at Fern Lodge as a metaphysical focus. Mary Baker Eddy refers to this citation as a ...*rule in Christian Science... that is applicable to every stage and state of human existence* (Mis. 200:11). She also says that this rule is the basis of Jesus' healing works. The verse is from Paul (II Corinthians 12:10), *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake*:

This statement caused me to do much self-examination. How can we enjoy illnesses or distresses, our own or someone else's? The only possible way I can see to agree honestly with Paul's statement is in the last three words, ...*for Christ's sake*. For the sake of Truth; for the sake of demonstrating the spiritual reality of being; for the sake of glorifying God. Mrs. Eddy says, *Christians today should be able to say, with the sweet sincerity of the apostle, "I take pleasure in infirmities," — I enjoy the touch of weakness, pain, and all suffering of the flesh, because it compels me to seek the remedy for it, and to find happiness, apart from the personal senses* (Mis. 200:20).

I'd like to offer an illustration of what this *rule in Christian Science* means to me as a nurse. One afternoon I was assisting a patient to get up from her chair. It was a simple task, one I had done many times. But when I attempted to lift her, she didn't budge. I bent over and tried again, using more oomph. She stood right up. But I was not sure I would ever be upright again. I felt a sharp pain in my back. I did manage to slowly stand and begin walking down the hall.

The first thoughts that came flooding in were of self-condemnation. I realized that I had unwittingly accepted a personal sense of my work that puts limits on everything. I had so many tasks to accomplish in a limited period of time. I had acted, to some degree, impatiently and willfully.

Gratefully, these thoughts were quickly challenged by the Christ, the true idea. I acknowledged that I couldn't suffer as the result of doing good. Giving nursing assistance was doing good, and therefore this activity was divinely impelled and supported, because God is the only source of good. I had gone just a short way down the hall when a nurse asked if I would assist her to lift another patient. My back still was painful, and so I started to decline. I knew the nurse would be considerate of my need.

But the truth that it is God who enables me to nurse was so clear to me that, instead, I said that I would be happy to help. It wasn't until I actually began to lift that the pain disappeared—totally and completely. I rejoiced and thanked God.

Reviewing this experience, I see that I wasn't doing anything wrong in helping the woman. In fact, I was doing something right, both humanly and divinely, but I was doing it from the wrong basis. My mistake was in thinking I could do something useful independent of God—on my own steam, so to speak. The discomfort I felt simply revealed the inadequacy, the infirmity, of a personal sense of good. Unknowingly, I was attempting to exclude God from His own kingdom.

So, where is the pleasure? The joy? The delight? We don't take pleasure in distress and just leave it there. We see the discomfort of a false, material sense of life as inseparable from the coming of the Christ which reveals the true idea and demonstrates the presence and power of God to bring comfort and healing. This *rule in Christian Science* applies to every one of us, whatever our circumstances. Christian Science nursing provides us with a joyous opportunity to welcome, witness and *demonstrate the triumph of good that has pleasure in infirmities* (Mis. 201:30).



You have heard of the on-going need for donations to Fern Lodge due to the financial needs of the individuals we serve. Now I'd like to tell of other recent challenges that have come to Christian Science nursing facilities. Articles in the Christian Science periodicals have reported on three related issues: 1) the intention of The Mother Church as of January 1997 no longer to accredit nursing facilities; 2) the formation by facilities in cooperation with the Church of an accrediting corporation to be recognized by Federal and State governments; and 3) the decision by a Minnesota judge who ruled that the statute which allows payment of Federal funds to Christian Science nursing facilities is not constitutional, with the result that, unless his decision is reversed or the statute changed, such payments will no longer be made.

It's a demanding time for Christian Science nursing facilities. We need to see that the situations we face do not threaten the practice of Christian Science nursing or its availability to aid those in need. No matter what happens each church member is free to express the loving care with which our Father-Mother God cares for us. This care is God's manifestation of love for His children, and it cannot be stopped nor *return unto Him void*. Christian Science nursing remains available and effective as long as there are individuals who act as they are led in prayer to be the good Samaritans of today and love as Christ Jesus loved his disciples. We can trust that today the Christ inspires nurses and impels them to action. Christian Science nursing is not threatened by human laws, court decisions or government agencies.

We are grateful for recent events; they have impelled us to strive to understand more fully God's care—for each of us and for our fellow man. It is clear that no matter what the short-term outcome of the present situation, we will not find in facility accreditation procedures, health insurance policies, or government programs adequate answers to the questions, "Who cares for man, and how? What is the source of supply that meets each one of our daily needs? Where should I put my confidence and reliance as years go by?" Answers to questions like these are found in our study and practice of Christian Science.

There is a demand on us, and it is essential that we rise to meet this demand. It is for individual demonstration of the truths of Christian Science in our lives, demonstration which places us as building blocks of Church, providing *proof of its utility*. The spiritual facts of being show us how to understand the present truth of our Leader's statement in *Science and Health* (62:22).

The divine Mind, which forms the bud and blossom, will care for the human body, even as it clothes the lily; but let no mortal interfere with God's government by thrusting in the laws of erring, human concepts.

It is our right and our duty to demonstrate Mind's care for the human body and to avoid being influenced by so-called *laws of erring, human concepts*. It doesn't matter who we are or what we do. Sunday School student or seasoned worker, we all can trust God to meet our every need. We can expect to remain active and fruitful as we grow to understand Mrs. Eddy's scientific statement of being, *all is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation*, including personal care. We need not anticipate or plan for a period of decline or dwindling resources, for ourselves, for our Church, or for mankind.

We humbly ask you to join us in seeking a deeper understanding and demonstration of God's care and of His infinite, ever-present provision of the resources which accompany divine comfort, protection, nourishment, support—all that we now perceive as Christian Science nursing.

Understanding God's care for us, we will trust in and rely on Him exclusively to meet our needs at all times. And we will naturally demonstrate the fullness of our understanding of care by helping others whenever there is a need. Mrs. Eddy includes this spiritual fact in our textbook, *The rich in spirit help the poor in one grand brotherhood, all having the same Principle, or Father; and blessed is that man who seeth his brother's need and supplieth it, seeking his own in another's good* (*Science and Health* 518:15).



Healing comes as the scene shifts into light — Beverly Bemis Hawks Dewindt

Let's imagine that we are seated in a theater eagerly anticipating a long-awaited play. A dark velvet curtain veils the scene. The curtain goes up. Lights on the stage gradually come on. "The scene shifts into light." We see performers, costumes, and the props on stage. We see that there was not one scene of blank nothingness indicating emptiness and another scene of bright somethingness revealing the individualities and action needed to make the show complete. All the while there were not two scenes, but just one. As the performance proceeds, the curtain that obscured the scene in the first place and that darkness that dissipated when the light appeared are entirely out of thought.

So it is when we're spiritually working in Christian Science. As we study and pray, the *true Light*, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world becomes brighter and brighter in individual human consciousness (*John* 1:9). Then we become better and better in the performance of good which results in healing. We understand more clearly Mary Baker Eddy's statement, *Advancing spiritual steps in the teeming universe of Mind lead on to spiritual spheres and exalted beings. To material sense, this divine universe is dim and distant, gray in the sombre hues of twilight; but anon the veil is lifted, and the scene shifts into light* (*Science and Health* 513:6-10).

Let's consider the story of Job in the Bible as an example of one instance where the scene shifted into light. The problem presented in the book can be stated in one brief question: "Why do the righteous suffer?" The principal purpose of the book is to counteract the theory that suffering is a sign of divine displeasure.

The first of Job's mortal afflictions or tests which he endured was that he was depleted of his wealth and bereaved of his family. Animal magnetism's purpose was to cause Job to lose his faith in God. The second of Job's afflictions or tests was the attack on his body, depriving him of his health. Still, Job's faith didn't waiver.

The next scene opens with the introduction of Job's three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—who came for the common purpose of helping Job. However,

instead of bringing healing to him, they condemned and rebuked him.

As you know, Job constantly declares his innocence when his friends come and tell him that if a man is righteous, he gets a reward, and if he isn't, he doesn't. It was the Deuteronomic theory on which these friends were basing their reasoning. This time-honored concept was very important to them in their theological doctrine. Of course, it is true that if an individual is righteous, he receives a reward. However, simply because one has no apparent reward now, it is unjust to believe that he must necessarily be unrighteous. This typical psychological diagnosing is exactly what Christian Scientists would never do.

Job's three friends who sought to console him failed in their mission because they dogmatically held to the letter of their theological views and ignored the spirit which would have reached his heart, never recognizing that the heart is the place of meeting.

They are sure they know why Job's misfortunes have come upon him and begin a series of debates in an effort to help Job see the error of his ways. A strange kind of friendship it is when friends look for some psychological blame for a man's difficulty. No Christian Science nurse or attendant would ever be psychological with patients in their facility, going on a "witch hunt" in an attempt to find some bad thing in the person's thoughts—some excuse, some reason, some justification for a physical problem. True, the metaphysical work does uncover corrections needed, but the conclusion that a person must be bad because he has a physical problem is not Christian Science. This is animal magnetism; this is mental malpractice. The thought which needs to be erased may be just plain old fear.

What is the Christian Science way? Our work is not psychological; it is analytical. Our leader tells us that there is a rule involved. She writes, *The rule of mental practice in Christian Science is strictly to handle no other mentality but the mind of your patient, and treat this mind to be*

Christly. Any departure from this golden rule is inadmissible. And she adds, *This mental practice includes and inculcates the commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.'* Animal magnetism, hypnotism, etc., are disarmed by the practitioner who excludes from his own consciousness, and that of his patients, all sense of the realism of any other cause or effect save that which cometh from God (Miscellany 364:3-13).

Individually, we must refuse to participate in the picture that mortal mind presents to human consciousness because no picture of mortality has any basis of reality. Innately we know what is spiritually right, just as Job did in his unerring quest for God. Throughout what appeared to be a devastating experience, Job radically stuck with what he then knew of his innocence that had been humanly expressed as a righteous person manifesting his highest sense of identity.

What options are available for getting out of an untoward situation? It might be asked, "Does one want to die out of it, or does he want to live his way through the experience?"

Incidentally, the word experience means "something one lives through." Obviously, then, "experience" is not something one dies from. Living through experience, we reinforce and develop character, thereby becoming stronger. We gain a greater dominion and a more wonderful life, a more joyous and loving sense of life.

Let's consider here how Job lived his way out of the may facets of his miserable experience. Deep inside, Job desires to face God, yearning to know where He is, as he expressed it when he said, *Oh that I knew where I might find him!* (Job 23:3). God would never treat him as a non-entity, as his friends implied. "I would know the words He'd say; I'd understand what He'd say to me" (Job 23:5,6). He knew that his questions would be answered by God.

We see here the beginning of spiritual awakening in Job's thought. The scene is shifting into light for him. He is recognizing that God is Mind—one Mind. In fact, Job said, *He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth* (Job 23:13).

After the debates, a new member of the cast is introduced: Elihu. This young man is enthusiastic, sensitive, eager, warm-hearted. These are qualities that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had long ago lost. Elihu had been admitted to the council of the elders only as a listener. But having heard the exchange between Job and his companions, Elihu's heart swelled with indignation toward the three. Eventually, Elihu upstages the three and shows Job something that is of invaluable help to the man. Elihu declares, *I...will ascribe righteousness to my Maker*, which causes Job to forget himself as the star in this performance and to start to see who the real star is (Job 36:3). He ponders Deity's omnipotence.

Elihu is sincere. God is very close to Elihu because Elihu is very close to God. In fact, Elihu declares that God is his life. He says, *The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life* (Job 33:4). He lets Job know that what is true of him is true of Job too. God is my life. He's yours also. He emphasizes, too, that man must reconcile himself to God and seek His ways and not expect God to reconcile Himself to man, as the Master himself showed regarding atonement.

Elihu assures Job that there is help, that divine Being does reveal to man that man is pure and Christly—yes, innocent; yes, righteous. Elihu reminds Job that deliverance does not happen only once in a lifetime, but many times. *Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man* (Job 33:29).

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In the remainder of Elihu's oration, we see that a storm which has been brewing now begins to break. Elihu uses this with the falling rain, thunder and lightning, the wind and the increased intensity of the storm as a symbol to illustrate God's government and power to supply the needs of mankind. He raises Job's thought regarding this symbolic meaning of the rain to correct the parched land which God does not know is parched, but it is simply this: The storm with it's rain is a provision of moisture for the summer wheat. We see here that God is always lovingly providing for the needs of mankind, while never knowing of human lack. In this way, we see that God does not know of corrections needed. He is already giving forth all there is to give whether we are ready to receive His infinite giving or not.

As we are receptive to all that is pouring forth from divine Love, what appears to us as human lack fades—be it lack of supply, lack of companionship, lack of confidence, home, children. As the scene shifts into light, we see God's unlimited goodness, forever present. All we have to do is be receptive. We might think we are receptive, but if we are filled with fear, doubt, and distrust of God's omnipotence, we are not receptive to His righteousness, to His abundant giving. Elihu's speech ends with emphasis on God's eternal and omnipotent nature.

At this point, Job forgets himself and his own sense of righteousness as the greatness and glory of God become more tangible to him. It is then that Job hears God speak from the center of the storm. Isn't that when we many times hear God speak to us, right out of the center of what may seem to be a stormy situation?

I will tell you of one particular healing of my own that occurred some twenty-five years ago. A most uncomfortable skin condition appeared covering most of my body. There were many aspects of healing that

occurred during the four months it took me to work this out. One of these aspects was realizing that whether I was asleep or awake, it was natural for me to be ever conscious of my real identity as a spiritual image and likeness of God.

At first, during the daytime, because of the constancy of my claim to spiritual identity, I was able to refrain from scratching my skin and to thwart aggressive mental suggestions that there is sensation in matter. However, at night I would wake out of a deep sleep to find myself scratching. Soon I was able to control this reaction through prayer. How? Before I would go to sleep, I would know that there was never a time when I could be unconscious, not knowing what I was doing.

Several times after I saw that, I would awaken during the night aware of the mental suggestion to scratch but my hands remained completely relaxed. Having known before retiring that I was under God's loving direction and protection, I had already recognized that I was ever in control of my thoughts and actions. I never again found myself scratching during the night. Not long after, these aggressive thoughts ceased. Eventually, the final healing of the whole problem came.

As Job, through spiritual sense, glimpsed an awareness of God's omnipotence, he had an awakened vision. The awesome majesty of his Creator dawned upon him. Instead of God's telling Job what to do humanly to correct mistakes about which God knows nothing, God talked about His own perfect Self. He told Job how wonderful He, Himself, is, how beautiful His creation is, how marvelous His universe is. "Look at what I have done! Look at My wonderful universe!" It was the still, small voice of inner consciousness, spiritual sense, that revealed God to Job, by which Job heard God's voice,

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which was very real to him, for it spoke to him from within, as it always does for any of us, just as it did to me in my healing of a skin condition.

It was when Job stopped mulling over being a right-thinking mortal or a wrong-thinking mortal that he did see God face to face, for he said, *I Have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee (Job 42:5).* "Now I see myself as You see me, spiritual!" is apparently what Job is saying. Now I get it! *Mortals will echo Job's thought, Mrs. Eddy says, when the supposed pain and pleasure of matter cease to predominate. They will then drop the false estimate of life and happiness, of joy and sorrow, and attain the bliss of loving unselfishly, working patiently, and conquering all that is unlike God. Starting from a higher standpoint, one rises spontaneously, even as light emits light without effort...(Science and Health 262:18).*

Here Job was right on the brink of success and yet there still remained what could have been one tragic flaw—resentment toward his three former friends. According to the way Job saw it, God was displeased with these patriarchs (Job 42:7, 8). Might it have been that Job himself was displeased with them? Of course we don't know, but possibly these three themselves realized their mistakes. Job does forgive them—even prays for them to be free of ignorance. He didn't let his own personal sense prevent him from loving them and seeing their innocence just as he saw it in himself. Job wins his own freedom from resentment which set the stage for his freedom from all his other difficulties as well.

We see here that this was an active role that Job played in forgiving—not a passive one. He prayed; he cared for his friends. This was a symptom of his own progress. Job was a great man at the beginning of the book, but he is an even greater one at the end. The point is made, *So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning (Job 42:12).*

Job's growing trust in God's ability to heal him right where he appeared to be in the flesh is echoed and re-echoed in great numbers of healings down through the

ages and to our present day, as recorded in our daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals, at our Wednesday testimonial meetings, and in healings that have occurred at Fern Lodge as well. Right here, in what appears to be "in the flesh," we see God too. Though mortal eyes do not see Spirit, all may see the effects of Spirit, just as we do not see the wind, but we see all the effects of wind—clouds move, leaves blow. Unlike Job's three friends, we see that we're not primarily here to see through others, but to see others through.

As it was with Job, so it is with all of us, deep down within us are reserves stored up by past achievements. As John Ruskin, English essayist, critic, and reformer, wrote, *The highest reward for a person's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it.* What we have become—by working through healings that sometimes are not instantaneous or without effort—is that we begin to see as Job did, the way all-seeing and all-knowing Mind sees and knows, and we can say with Job, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee (Job 42:5).* This is when the scene shifts from darkness to light and healing occurs because we have seen that there is only one identity that each of us has—spiritual identity.

Beverly Bemis Hawks DeWindt
October 27, 1996



The Sermon on the Mount — You're invited to an all-day Bible seminar

When: Saturday, January 25, 1997

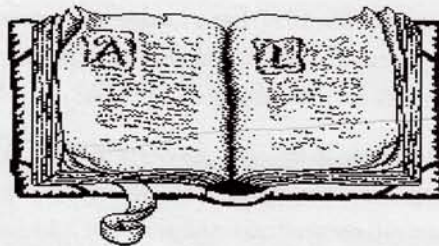
9:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Where: Marines' Memorial Club

Crystal Ballroom

609 Sutter Street at Mason Street

San Francisco, CA



Speaker: Mary Jane Chapin graduated with a Masters of Arts degree, majoring in both the Old and New Testaments, from Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. As a class- taught Christian Scientist she brings special perspective to the Bible text.

Fee: \$50.00 (includes lunch in the Commandant's Room)

Parking near Marines' Memorial

| <u>Where</u> | <u>Who</u> | <u>Price</u> |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 611 Sutter Street | Olympic Garage | \$18.00 all day |
| 840 Sutter Street | Butterick Garage | \$7.00 if before 9:30 |
| 450 Sutter Street, between Powell & Stockton | | \$13.75 for 12 hours |
| 520 Mason Street | System Parking | \$14.00 up to 12 hours |
| O'Farrell & Mason | Downtown Center Garage | \$9.00 if before 9:30 |
| Union Square | Union Square Garage | \$20.00 all day |
| Stockton & Sutter | Stockton & Sutter Garage | \$15.00 all day |
| 415 Taylor Street, near Geary | | \$10.00 for 12 hours |

Registration for *The Sermon on the Mount*

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Please include all names you are registering for.

Please register me for _____ place(s) at \$50.00 each. \$ _____

I cannot attend. Please use this donation to defray
the costs of the day or provide for scholarships. \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Mail this form with your check, payable to Fern Lodge, before **January 16, 1997**.
If you do not register in advance, you are welcome to attend, but we cannot guarantee a lunch.
If you have any questions please call Valerie or Evelyn at Fern Lodge, (510) 886-2448.

The Sermon on the Mount — an all-day Bible seminar

Saturday, January 25, 1997 Fern Lodge will present a Bible program at Marines' Memorial Club in San Francisco. Mary Jane Chapin will share insights into the *Sermon on the Mount*. Ms. Chapin offers the following comments on the subject of her talk:

"Mrs. Eddy writes, *To my sense the Sermon on the Mount, read each Sunday without comment and obeyed throughout the week, would be enough for Christian practice. The Word of God is a powerful preacher, and it is not too spiritual to be practical, nor too transcendental to be heard and understood* ('01 11:16). Yet many people find this Sermon to be too difficult. Christians have developed an amazing variety of reasons why one could not or should not obey Jesus' commands. Either he didn't mean what he said, or he said what he didn't mean, or what he said applies to a different time than now, or in a different way.

"We will be examining this Sermon in its entirety, asking whether these words are practical, do-able. Do they make sense? Is this Sermon comprised of short sayings, thrown together at random or is there a sense of unity, order, unfoldment? We will discover a process, a way of living in a relationship with God and with people. We will find that these words are neither totally unattainable nor easily attainable. They are neither the cause for hopeless despair nor foolish optimism. The path will be difficult, but it is inexorably tied to the Christian imperative to be in practice what we already are in reality as children of a loving Father, Mother, God. It remains a standard for those who possess the Christ spirit."

A registration form for the *Sermon on the Mount* program and information about parking near Marines' Memorial is on page 7 of this *Focus*. For more information call Valerie or Evelyn at Fern Lodge.

At our Annual Meeting we told of the continuing need for funds to aid those who are unable to pay the cost of their care at Fern Lodge. Recently we sent a letter in which we explained our financial need. That need remains urgent. We are grateful for your responses, your prayers and your actions, which will help to meet this challenge.

Fern Lodge Focus — December 1996

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