

# *Fern Lodge Focus*

*December 1997*

*...ye shall receive power, after  
that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...*

## *The Acts of the Apostles*

A talk by Mary Jane Chapin

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George Strong, Fern Lodge Administrator

Christian caring and Christian healing are not two separate things. You can't have one without the other, because they are the human manifestation of divine Truth and Love. But I'm going to focus on the Christian care we associate with Christian Science nursing.

Man's ability to express this care, to give it or to receive it, is found in Christ, the true idea of God. The source of this care is divine Love, our Mother-Father God who is not only our only Physician, but our only Care-giver. We're all familiar with these comforting promises, "...your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt 6:32-33); and "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" (*Science and Health*, 62:22).

I believe that the greatest challenge to Christian Science nursing today is the attempt of mortal mind to thrust upon this holy idea the laws of erring human concepts. These matter based concepts would claim that our health and well-being are in the hands of personal care-givers and an institutional hierarchy that would leave God out. Unless they are thoroughly handled and destroyed by Christian Science these aggressive suggestions would becloud or shade the true idea.

**T**he symptoms of this challenge are felt throughout the Christian Science nursing field. False human concepts of nursing would appear to limit the manifestation of God's care for man. They would claim that the financial status of an individual or institution can determine the quantity and quality of care that can be provided. They would say that one can exhaust man's supply of compassion, strength, wisdom, understanding, and other nursing qualities. They would say that there are not enough nurses, not enough good to go around.

Because human theories are not based on the Christ-rock of divine oneness with God, they allow good

and evil, spirit and matter to appear to dwell together and work together. This is the lie that would make us fear that in our obedience to the divine law—by unselfishly loving our neighbor as ourselves—we might be harmed, or cause harm to the one we are helping. As Christian Science nurses we must understand our connection to the divine source of wisdom and love, because we must face the world's beliefs about contagion and infection in handling claims such as scabies, AIDS, tuberculosis, and similar diseases. We must maintain our faith in God, who "forgiveth all (our) iniquities; who healeth all (our) diseases," (Psalm 103:3).

**W**hile thinking about what to share here, I was led to question some experienced nursing colleagues, from Fern Lodge, other Christian Science nursing facilities, and the Field. I asked, without prior comment or discussion: "What do you see as the biggest challenge to Christian Science nursing?" Let me share some of their responses.

- It's the pull that would keep us from our right activity as nurses; the influences based on a misperception of C.S. nursing that would sidetrack us.
- The biggest challenge is a general lack of understanding of the nature of Christian Science nursing, and the sacredness of its relationships.
- We need to impersonalize; it's hard, but it's what we need to do
- We need a higher vision of what Christian Science nursing is—we need to understand that it's metaphysical and spiritual, not physical or medical. We need to see that error is to be destroyed, not ignored or comforted. We need to correct the false perception that nursing will fix something.
- We need a continuing vision of Mary Baker Eddy's revelation of the By-Law about Christian Science nursing. It is an integral part of the dignity and defense of our Cause. We need to remember the sanctity and dignity of our mission.
- We need to be more reverent, to acknowledge the presence of God and the activity of Christ in all we do.



When I think of our nurses, I think of our Leader's statement: "Christian Science and the senses are at war."<sup>1</sup> That tells me that a Christian Science nurse is a soldier—a soldier of Christ committed to the continuing conflict with the senses. He or she has been called to a soldier's duty in that conflict with the senses, the combating of aggressive false suggestions about God and man. Of course the nurse is not unique in having that calling. Every one of us who has the courage and commitment to be a truly active member of the Christian Science church is a soldier of the cross.

However, the role of the nurse differs from the role most of us are asked to fulfill. Unlike most of us the nurses are our *front line troops*. The nurse is very visible to the neighbors, friends, and family members, who may have great concern about the care given to the patient. If among them there are any snipers, the Christian Science nurse is the easiest target to shoot at. In a military army, most of its resources and most of its personnel are committed to supporting those soldiers who are on the front lines. It ought to be that way in the army of Christian Scientists. We ought to be committed to supporting our nurses, valiantly serving on frontline duty every day.

It's well to realize how very frequently the Bible and Mrs. Eddy use the example of the soldier and military-like action to illustrate spiritual qualities you and I need to express—soldier qualities that protect and preserve what is good, right, and lawful. If you and I are soldiers, where is the battlefield? And what are we fighting?

The battlefield is not "out there" somewhere. It's always in your individual consciousness and mine. It's important to know at all times that you are at war with the *senses*—with sense testimony that would infiltrate your consciousness. You are not battling personalities or material conditions no matter the temptation to believe

that. As we stand guard at the door of thought, we should alertly detect any infiltrating aggressive false suggestion and, like a good soldier, quickly, decisively stop its disruptive, destructive purpose.

Three or four years ago, a nifty little means for exercising alertness to duty popped into thought—a weapon we can effectively employ in our warfare with the senses. Most radios are AM-FM. By analogy, we can speak of our radio of consciousness where we never should choose to listen to AM—to Animal Magnetism. Rather let us always choose to listen to FM—our Father-Mother God! If you are listening to animal magnetism, you can't hear Father-Mother; if you are listening to your Father-Mother, animal magnetism is denied any possibility of inserting itself into your consciousness. It's one or the other. It's your choice.

We're all familiar with other weapons of our spiritual warfare. There's a good reason why we should persistently practice using those weapons. There is something more

important for a soldier than any individual weapon, namely *confidence*. A soldier needs confidence in his weapons and in his ability to use those weapons effectively. For *any* soldier, steadfast confidence is indispensable for the successful completion of his mission. That's why military training never ceases. The soldier is provided with continuing experiences that enable him to maintain and enlarge his confidence.

We, as dedicated soldiers of the cross, also have continuing experiences that strengthen our confidence. However, if we misinterpret those challenging experiences as unwelcome trials, that may hide for a time the blessing in the challenges.

It's foolish to seek the source of confidence in a mortal sense of self, in a matter mind. Doing so may

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## *Christian Science Nursing, Confidence and You (continued)*

magnify one's ego, perhaps for a long time, but a mortal source is always uncertain. Confidence based there may vanish when most needed. For example when David faced Goliath, recall David's unwavering confidence in God's power, whereas the self-confidence of Saul and all his soldiers faltered and vanished before the boastful threats of Goliath.<sup>2</sup>

Long before radio, David understood the worth of our AM-FM weapon. David's salvation, his victory, was assured by a couple of firm AM-FM decisions he made on the battlefield of his own consciousness. First, he switched off AM's suggestion to use the weapons of his foe. Second, he was alert enough to discern that the battle was not what Goliath wanted it to be—a contest of personal skills and carnal weapons. David recognized that Goliath was defying God. That recognition roused David's confidence that God could not be successfully defied. So David in his own thinking changed the nature of the battle. And from that moment, Goliath was hopelessly outclassed.<sup>3</sup>

Whenever we face some Goliath challenge, let's not allow our foe to determine the nature of the battle nor the weapons we use. We are God's creation. Therefore anything that would attack us is trying to defy God. Realizing that we are at war with sense testimony and nothing else, we, like David, control the nature of the battle. If we do so as promptly and confidently as David, then any boastful challenger will have no opportunity to use the supposed power it claims to have.

Let's look at the parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>4</sup> as it relates to our discussion of Christian Science nursing and you. Good Sam exhibits many of the qualities included in the divine idea of Christian Science nursing. Clearly Jesus wants us to recognize those nursing qualities and incorporate them into our daily thought and action.

However, look at the other fellow, the one we might call the patient. He's seldom discussed, but Jesus has a message for us with him as well as with Good Sam. The parable illustrates divine Love meeting the need of a man unable to take care of himself and unable to procure the care he needs. When Good Sam bound up his wounds and carried him to an inn, the man, having been robbed, did not have funds to pay for his care. So the Good Samaritan paid for it.

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The story Jesus tells proclaims the spiritual fact that the operation of divine Love in meeting a human need is never limited by the amount of money the one in need possesses. We see in Jesus' story of Good Sam's patient an example of divine Love being reflected in human love reaching out unselfishly to care for someone unable to care for himself.

Today when someone does not have the funds with which to pay for the care they need, divine Love, as Jesus taught, can work through caring, loving individuals, giving them an active sense of benevolence and guiding them in the wise and effective expression of that Christian benevolence.

The most effective expression of Christian benevolence is likely to be through our financial and other support for the healing mission of Christian Science nursing and care facilities like Fern Lodge. By contributing our Good Samaritan support to Fern Lodge, for example, we help assure that someone who does not have the funds to procure the nursing care he or she needs, will nonetheless be cared for. We thus give practical evidence that "Love is reflected in love,"<sup>5</sup> as our Leader confidently declares. That's a responsibility, an opportunity, every earnest member of the Christian Science church has daily.

Obviously the love we express in supporting such things as Fern Lodge has many virtues, including helping others in our communities to realize that we truly are a loving, Christian people. It's good that they should know this. Because if we wish to offer to good people our Science, we must attract them by our Christianity.

It's important that we fully value the healing ministry of our Church. Failure to value sufficiently the healing ministry can hinder one's spiritual progress. Recall the rich young man who came to Jesus.<sup>6</sup> He was an earnest seeker after Christ. But Jesus detected and exposed the fact that he did not value the healing truth sufficiently. This young man, as I recall, was the only sincere seeker of the Christ whose thought and experience was *not* transformed by the Master Metaphysician. Think of the maladies Jesus healed instantly! But that young man was not helped so far as the record shows. His only shortcoming seems to have been his failure to value sufficiently the healing ministry of Christ.

If we have a full vision of what this healing ministry means to the welfare of mankind, if we're truly loving our brother with unselfish affection, this will lead us to a greater *desire* to support this work, and also to a greater *ability* to do so both financially and through broader healing work of our own. If we recognize that each of us in truth reflects the motherhood as well as the fatherhood of God, then it's reasonable to assert that we all can express the essence of Christian Science nursing. At least we have the opportunity each day to demonstrate that truth.

Now I'd like to share an example of Christian outreach made possible through the expression of nurse-like qualities. A young man who'd grown up in the Christian Science Sunday School was in college years seduced away from trying to follow Christ Jesus' example

by the sophistry of worldly thinking. Some years later he was going through a prolonged and worsening physical problem. Finally it seemed necessary to him to enter a hospital.

The medical diagnosis and prognosis were so dire that these frightened him into a desperate hope that Christian Science might help. So he called his parents and they called me. I could not treat the young man who had chosen to place himself under medical care. However, remembering the statement of Mrs. Eddy that emphasizes the virtue of common sense and common humanity,<sup>7</sup> I knew this was not a time for common humanity to be disregarded.

What about reaching out to him with the loving Christian qualities that are the mark of the Christian Science nurse? What about expressing tenderness and "pitiful patience with his fears"<sup>8</sup> and some thought to help remove the fears? How about pointing his thought towards a firm basis for hope and awakening him to his natural

trust that God is "a very present help in trouble"?<sup>9</sup> For this young man who'd fallen among the thieves of mortal beliefs, I could strive to express those nursing qualities that won praise for the Good Samaritan. I could watch that I did not pass by on the other side with only a pious word in doing so.

He told me he had two days before removal of vital organs that would cripple most activities for the remainder of his life. We talked for a time. Then I urged him to use the textbooks, to stop the stream of visitors, and to get to work in prayerful study.

I thought of a Sunday School teacher talking to a very young class about Jesus saying, "Feed my lambs."<sup>10</sup> She asked, "How would you feed the lambs?" One little boy answered, "Just a little, but warm." So I let that little

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child lead me. As a result, I think I expressed more of the nurse's role than what we might think is the traditional role of a practitioner.

I agreed to go with the parents to see their son—provided he made the request. When they called him and he found out I'd go all that way just to talk to him, something happened. He said, gratefully, that he felt it too much to ask of me. But his quick response to the nurse-like love expressed, and the growth in confidence that companioned it, bore fruit. The next medical exam brought exclamations of joy from the doctors. There was a radical change. The operation was not performed, and soon the man was restored to normal activity.

Christian Science nursing is a spiritual idea, not a personally evolved activity. Therefore, it can appear anywhere, even in the experience of a non-Scientist. A woman was having Christian Science treatment for what appeared to be a severe physical challenge. Her husband was not a Christian Scientist, but he tried to be supportive. Meanwhile he was struggling with an ugly and long-persistent acne-type rash that covered his face. He was applying creams and powders to his face, but the ugly rash persisted.

One evening the woman asked her husband to read the Lesson to her. He had read portions of Lessons before, but tended to just read words without recognizing or expressing much meaning in them. However, this time he read with much love and some measure of understanding. He would often repeat a reference that he felt was especially helpful. Sometimes he would stop to add a helpful comment of his own. He read aloud the entire Lesson in this loving manner.

The next morning, he awakened his wife to ask her to look at his face. It was perfectly clear. The long-

persisting rash had simply vanished into its native nothingness. I think this man had embodied some of the qualities that a Christian Science nurse brings to a case. This was the divine idea of Christian Science nursing expressing itself, first in his being strongly moved to express to his wife the tender, encouraging qualities of Christian nursing, and then, as a consequence, experiencing himself the healing effects of the divine idea of Christian Science nursing.

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When a nurse is present, he or she persistently helps turn the patient's thought to God and away from apparent material conditions. The nurse's mission is spiritual. Though the nurse will bandage and bathe and provide comfort, our nurses are never nursemaids to matter. We all have in common with our nurses the mission of drawing nigh to God and, for others, pointing the way to God.

My friends, as Good Samaritans let's go forth to actively cherish, live, and share the divine idea of Christian Science nursing. I wish you joyful triumphs in your warfare with the senses. As a fellow soldier, I salute you!

Donald A. Jensen, C.S.  
October 19, 1997

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellaneous Writings* 101:8 (only)

<sup>2</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:24

<sup>3</sup> See 1 Samuel 17:32-50

<sup>4</sup> See Luke 10:30-37

<sup>5</sup> *Science and Health* 17:7

<sup>6</sup> See Mark 10:17-23

<sup>7</sup> See *Science and Health* 365:7

<sup>8</sup> See *Science and Health* 367:3

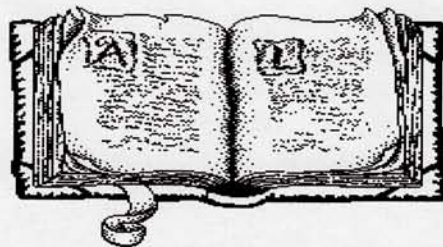
<sup>9</sup> See Psalm 46:1

<sup>10</sup> See John 21:15

# *The Acts of the Apostles — You're invited to an all-day Bible talk*

When: **Saturday, February 7, 1998**  
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** has received a Masters of Arts degree, majoring in both the Old and New Testaments. As a class- taught Christian Scientist she brings special perspective to the Bible. Her series, *Experiencing the Gospel of Mark*, is currently in *The Christian Science Journal*.

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

## *Parking near Marines' Memorial*

<u>Where</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Price</u>
840 Sutter Street	Butterick Garage	\$12/day or \$7.00 if in by 9:30 & out by 6:00
450 Sutter Street	450 Sutter Garage	\$14.00 until 8:00 pm
O'Farrell & Mason	Downtown Center Garage	\$9.00 if in by 9:30 & out by 6:00
330 Post Street	Union Square Garage	\$20.00 all day
310 Sutter Street	Stockton & Sutter Garage	\$15.00 all day

Directions from BART: Exit at Powell Street Station. Walk 4 blocks north on Powell to Sutter Street, then 1 block west (left) on Sutter. The Marines' Memorial is near the corner of Sutter and Mason on the south (left) side of Sutter Street.

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Registration for *The Acts of the Apostles*

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 30, 1998**.  
If you do not register in advance you still are welcome to attend, but we cannot guarantee a lunch.  
If you have any questions please call Valerie at Fern Lodge, (510) 886-2448.

# Our work for Fern Lodge — George Strong

"Because Science is unimpeachable, it summons the severest conflicts of the ages and waits on God" (*Miscellany* 103:2). This statement of our Leader is born out in our experience. We are glad for our opportunities to confront challenges which accompany the conflicts of the ages, they remind us of our need for God. Thanks to Christ Jesus' example we are able to wait on God and to trust in Him in spite of the challenges we face at Fern Lodge.

Some challenges are common to all institutions, including those you may be part of. They involve the suggestions that man can be separated from God or that God's care may be inadequate to meet individual human needs. These challenges appear in many forms. One form is a continuing financial demand. We pray to rely on God and the individual demonstration of Christianity to help meet the needs of patients who seek benevolent financial aid.

Another suggestion is the temptation to think that working, or being a patient, in an institution like Fern Lodge lessens the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own experience. Each of

us needs to pray to maintain our individuality and our inspiration, our unique relationship with God. None of us, staff or patients, can afford to relinquish our responsibility for the demonstration of Christian Science in our daily lives. Working at Fern Lodge demands individual reliance on God from everyone. And the facility administration must respect and trust the individual demonstration of those who work there.

We also need to deny the suggestion that institutional settings, are susceptible to contagious conditions. We can meet this suggestion fearlessly, knowing it is but one of the "conflicts of the ages" our Leader spoke of, as "summoned by Science," by the demand to demonstrate the law of God. Then we need to "wait on God."

Our prayer is to stand with Mrs. Eddy, who described herself in this way: "As of old, I stand with sandals on and staff in hand, waiting for the watchword and the revelation of what, how, whither. Let us be faithful and obedient, and God will do the rest" (*Miscellaneous Writings* 158:19).

We are grateful that for the first time Fern Lodge has no mortgage or other long-term debt. Our only financial obligations are current accounts for the daily operation of the facility. We still require donations from the Field to help meet patients' benevolence needs.

## Fern Lodge Focus — December 1996

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Address correction requested

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