

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

These two familiar passages, the first from Isaiah 9 and the second from Luke 2, tell of the joy we feel at Christmas, and throughout the year, whenever we remember Christ Jesus and his selfless ministry to mankind—healing the sick and saving sinners.

“Good will toward men!” It’s a wonderful promise that holds special meaning for us at Fern Lodge. An essential meaning of good will is benevolence. A spiritual understanding of benevolence, with its daily demonstration, is a vital aspect of Christian Science nursing and is integral to our ministry and mission.

An article in the October 2012 issue of *The Christian Science Journal* titled, “True Benevolence,” describes the financial stability that resulted at a Christian Science nursing facility when they “shifted from a policy of ‘no benevolence’ to one of ‘serving all whom God sends to be served, regardless of ability to pay.’” Brad Stock wrote in that article, “Benevolence...is living the great commandments taught by Christ Jesus—loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbor as ourselves. It is the essence of true fellowship and our prime responsibility toward each other as members of Christ’s universal church.”

Fern Lodge always has served all whom God sends to us who need Christian Science nursing. We have been blessed by this policy, and many Christian Scientists in our community have received benevolence assistance as a result.

One blessing to us from our benevolent policy is the close contact we maintain with Christian Scientists who wish to help others. We do not have significant investments. All of the benevolence assistance we give actually comes from donations to Fern Lodge that are given for this purpose.



Many of those we serve receive some financial assistance from the California welfare program, Medi-Cal. However each patient still needs about \$100/day in benevolence contributions to meet the actual cost of their stay. That’s about \$3,000 each month for each one receiving Medi-Cal funding.

Similarly, the federal Medicare program provides financial assistance, but each patient receiving Medicare funding needs about \$70/day, or \$2,100 each month in benevolence assistance.

The total benevolence Fern Lodge gives each month totals about \$60,000.

Thank you for your prayerful support and for the financial assistance you may give, individually, through your branch church or association, or in bequests, to support the benevolence Fern Lodge gives to many deserving and devoted students of Christian Science.

“The human affections need to be changed from self to benevolence and love for God and man; changed to having but one God and loving Him supremely, and helping our brother man. This change of heart is essential to Christianity...” (*Misc.* pp 50-51).

Gratefully,

George Strong, Administrator

ROZANNE ZWICK — CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

It doesn't seem possible that just over a year ago I was getting settled in my new home and new position at Fern Lodge. I've worked hard and put in some long hours, but I am having fun as I "grow in grace" while fulfilling the daily duties of Director of Christian Science Nursing. I'm grateful for the support of everyone at Fern Lodge and am pleased to have such a dedicated staff who reflect the divine qualities of cheerfulness, faithfulness, persistence, spiritual intuition, dedication, and conviction in the Truth!

It's been a good year full of spiritual growth for patients and staff. We are rededicating ourselves to Fern Lodge's mission "to heal." We began last fall by reading the book, *Mary Baker Eddy: Christian Healer*, Amplified Edition. We spent most of our time focusing on the section "Advice for healers," sharing ideas and fresh insights for our own healing work as Christian Science nurses and in our personal lives.

In January, our friend, Chris Williams, began facilitating a series of meetings exploring the *Manual By-Law* for the Christian Science nurse. Through the lens of the "perfect model" for Christian Science nursing we've had three of four workshops on the *Manual By-law* for the Christian Science nurse. During these workshops we identify impositions on our nursing practice and turn to the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings to find Biblical solutions.

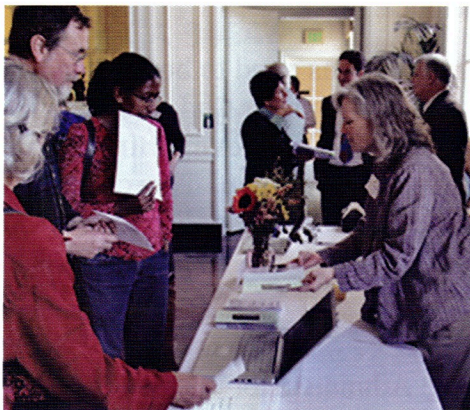
We continue to see examples of progress as dominion in accomplishing daily activities is demonstrated by patients. Examples of this dominion range from physical healings of limited mobility to more dedicated study and application of Christian Science and overcoming mental limitations.

This past year we've also provided "outpatient nursing care" for individuals who were able to return to their homes after receiving nursing serves at Fern Lodge. One local church member came to Fern Lodge two days per week to participate in the morning activities. Participation in "day care" at Fern Lodge provides Christian Scientists with a sense of independence. We have delivered nursing supplies and visited church members in their homes.

We are very grateful for Christian Science practitioners. Imagine the healing support each patient receives from the Christian Science practitioner's prayers, combined with the clear witnessing of the Christian Science nurse!

Our purpose at Fern Lodge is to heal. From our vantage point as Christian Science healers, we see evidence of the Christ at work in our patients and in our nursing practice on a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment basis.

— Rozanne Zwick



Christian Science Care and Services Fair

Pictured at left is the Fern Lodge table at the Fair held in September at Arden Wood in San Francisco. Organizations that provide Christian Science nursing, care, residential services, and financial assistance offered information and answered questions. Also included in the afternoon program were two panel discussions, one on Christian Science nursing and another on the financial resources available to help pay for Christian Science care and the importance of advance health care directives. If you have any questions, please contact Fern Lodge.

SHARON STRONG — CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING EDUCATION

Over the last year, I changed roles from being the Director of Christian Science nursing to the full-time Director of Christian Science Nursing education. This reflects our enlarged vision of our education program and its broadening outreach. Our Program has a complete and well-established classroom curriculum, with courses that cover every area of Christian Science nursing with the attendant discussions on ethical thought and behavior. Following the classroom instruction, thorough mentoring and supervision is provided by our experienced nursing staff.

We find our program is well suited to individuals who have previous life experiences in caring for others, who have demonstrated a maturity in prayerfully approaching challenges, and who can progress more rapidly in completing the curriculum. We think of it more like a home-schooling model, where students are able to progress at their own pace. Currently 10 individuals are on a waiting list for this training, and several on staff have nearly completed their courses. Our latest student is here from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

This January, we traveled to Peru for a week to conduct workshops on Christian Science nursing in Lima. We spoke to two groups of 20 individuals and interviewed 16 individuals at length about Christian Science nursing and opportunities to nurse in Peru and Fern Lodge. Those we spoke with came away with a better understanding of the relationship of Christian Science nursing to healing in our church, and how Christian Science nursing facilities such as Fern Lodge support that healing mission. And we were impressed with their deep dedication to Christian Science, their reverence for Mrs. Eddy, and their sincere, earnest desire to care for their fellow man.

Throughout this year we have had opportunities to share Christian Science nursing workshops in a number of local branch churches. These three-hour

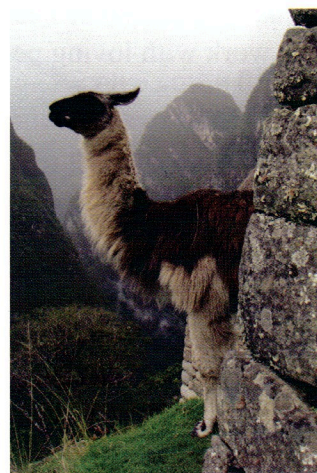


care workshops discuss the metaphysical basis and nature of caring for our fellow man, and we demonstrate some practical ways to assist each other, such as visiting church members at home, simple food suggestions, helping someone in church, or up off the floor, and getting in and out of a car, and the ethics involved in these situations, etc.

As we look forward to the future of our education program at Fern Lodge, we remember Mrs. Eddy's test for all prayers: "Do we love our neighbor better because of this

asking?" Our prayers for the education program include looking for new and higher ways in which to love, bless, and aid our neighbors in our community and the world. We strive to exemplify what our Leader describes (*Miscellany* p. 253) as the entire purpose of true education, "to make one not only know the truth but live it—to make one enjoy doing right,...make one not work in the sunshine and run away in the storm, but ... wait on God, the strong deliverer, who will reward righteousness....It rejoices me to know that you know that healing the sick, soothing sorrow, brightening this lower sphere with the ways and means of the higher and everlasting harmony, brings to light the perfect original man and universe. What nobler achievement, what greater glory can nerve your endeavor? Press on! My heart and hope are with you."

— Sharon Strong



PATIENT ACTIVITIES — JANET LEON



Janet Leon

Working at Fern Lodge has been a wonderful experience. As the Activities Assistant, I host a hymn sing once a week, assist patients on daily walks, update schedules, help in joy of movement classes, and go on outings with patients. I also really enjoy helping the patients bake cookies and spending time with the patients while I paint their nails. But more important than these activities, my job is to love and support the patients. I am certain that these lessons in care and responsibility will help lead me to success in my future.

At Fern Lodge, we come together as a family and help support one another. I work side by side with Robin Barben, the Activities Director, and I'm very grateful for her example. She has shown me how to have a positive mind and never let negativity get me down. I am learning how to express these qualities in my job every day.

Throughout my time here I have enjoyed learning about Christian Science and its healing power. It's interesting how with just prayer you're healed, and I've had personal experiences of healings. I am truly thankful to be here and to work with loving people. It has had a large impact on my life.

— Janet Leon

COSTUME PARTY, OCTOBER 2012 — NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL PROJECT PRESENTED BY ROBIN MARQUAND



JANET, WITH OUR FRIENDS, RAULITO AND RAUL



ROBIN AND BRIANNA IN COSTUME

With a piñata to smash and pumpkins to carve, it was a wonderful time for all!



SKIPPY, NATHAN, AND LEILA

***Fern Lodge Focus* — December 2012**
18457 Madison Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit
Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Hayward, CA
Permit No. 798

Fern Lodge Annual Meeting

September 2012

JESUS' PROMISE: YOU WILL DO GREATER WORKS

Christine Irby Williams

ciwilliams1@live.com; 281-989-2468 (mobile); 713-534-1541 (office/home)

"CRADLED OBSCURITY"

George [George Strong, Fern Lodge Administrator] and I have a colleague in our work with The Principle Foundation who wrote the most beautiful piece recently. She said:

A couple of nights ago I was unable to sleep. This is most unusual for me, as I can sleep through final exams and train wrecks, so as I lay in the dark staring at the ceiling, I started to repeat to myself the opening paragraph of the textbook, *Science and Health*, and I was uncertain of the exact wording of the third sentence, so I turned on the light, and as I read I got no further than the two words "cradled obscurity."

I had never really looked at those two words, which now held for me a world of meaning: "cradled obscurity." To me that meant Love's protection, care, all the adjectives attached to the word "cradled." Out of the eyes of worldly thought.

Then as I began to consider this concept over the next couple of days, I came to a change of heart about Christian Science organizations. I'd been asking: Why are we not better known? What do we need to do to get our name and mission out there? Why do so many people not know what we do?

As I thought of "cradled obscurity," I thought, well, those are the wrong questions. Promotion is not the issue or objective. It's about the love. We can trust divine Love to bring to us those who are ready for what we have to give. And what is that? Our clear consciousness that divine Love meets every human need. And what is that need? The spiritual awareness that divine Love is our source of supply; as Paul so eloquently puts it, "We live and move and have our being in Him." The conviction that, as Mary Baker Eddy quotes the Psalmist, "I shall dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [Love] forever."

As the Board and staff lift up this Christ consciousness in thought, then those who are ready for this message, this Christ light that dispels the illusions of carnal mindedness, will be drawn to us exactly as Jesus notes (John 6:44):

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..."

Let our healing Christ-light in consciousness be our marketing. It's the pebble in the pond. As each case meets its healing resolution, the effects of that work go out in radiant circles of light to bless others.

Doesn't that description fit Fern Lodge perfectly?! Tucked away in a residential neighborhood, among sweet folks who are carrying on their daily lives, their cars driving by, while they have no idea about what's going on there! The people who need to know about it do – its vendors and neighbors, the staff, those served, and their families and friends. Oh, and there's a dog, cats, and some other dear creatures who participate in the daily ministrations. It's understated, definitely "in cradled obscurity." It's really a lot like that simple place where spiritual birth was witnessed, where joy and love bubbled up, more than two thousand years ago.

At Fern Lodge and in Christian Science nursing around the world, nothing calls attention to itself, except a humble message about the simplicity of the Christ. All this reminds me of what Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:35). And of Paul's message to his friends in Corinth, "Now abideth faith, hope and charity...but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13). Fern Lodge is a model of Mrs. Eddy's description of the members of her church: "A Christian Scientist is a humanitarian; he is benevolent, forgiving, long-suffering, and seeks to overcome evil with good" (Man. Art. VIII, Sect. 22).

This is what Christian Science and its nursing ministries around the world are all about. Perhaps you have been blessed by the humble message, the simplicity of the Christ that Christian Science nursing represents. Maybe you've been touched by the generosity, the great charity of Fern Lodge, or by some other healing outreach of Christian Science nursing. It's felt in healing and progress and spiritual growth, and in gratitude and peace.

The blessings of benevolence and compassion, the cleansing power of divine goodness—love, gratitude, and peace—these are manifestations of what Christ Jesus called "the Comforter." Such a strong word, Comforter, representing fortification that is representative of the Christ, Truth. These qualities are big. They are profound, and, like the light of a candle on a simple candlestick, they shine volumes about the work of Fern Lodge. They don't need a brass band or a hot air balloon or an ad campaign to reach those who may be blessed by them. All it takes is love, a love that is shared heart to heart and hand to hand. It's lived moment by moment and prayer by prayer.

It is not unusual for manifestations of the Comforter to be found in cradled obscurity. Like the manger in which the babe Jesus was found by the shepherds and the Wise Men, and like the rented upper room in which Mary Baker Eddy labored with patient love to find words to give the Comforter, the revelation of Christian Science, to the world through the writing of a textbook, so Fern Lodge and other Christian Science

nursing facilities are found in cradled obscurity. But the scope of the blessing in each case is broad, wide, deep—in fact, beyond measure.

“GREATER WORKS”?

And that takes us to the heart of the topic George picked for our theme today: “Jesus’ promise: You will do greater works.” This declaration/promise is found in John’s Gospel, and it’s introduced with emphasis, *“VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”* (John 14:12). It’s a strong call to attention.

Have you ever wondered what in the world Jesus meant by greater works? It does sound a little daunting. We read almost every week in the Bible Lesson something such as Jesus “went about...healing ALL manner of sickness and ALL manner of disease among the people.” He fed 5,000 men plus women and children with what had appeared to everyone else as a few loaves and fishes. He walked on water and suspended time and space. He raised to life a child who appeared to have just passed away, a young man who was on his way to be buried, and Lazarus, who had been in the grave four days already. And then, of course, he raised himself after the crucifixion, and he ascended.

So what could possibly be greater than any, much less all, of that? I’ve often wondered; and I’m still pondering his promise. I’m not going to presume to tell you what the greater works are. Nor can I possibly tell you what it will take to do them. But I will invite you to consider with me some possibilities! The idea is to get our mental motors running, to see the opportunities. Mrs. Eddy asks in one of her letters, “But what of ourselves, and our times and obligations? Are we duly aware of our own great opportunities and responsibilities? Are we prepared to meet and improve them, to act up to the acme of divine energy wherewith we are armored?” (Mis. 176:25). Great questions! And she wants us to respond to them. In fact, she ends a discussion of them with the call, “Answer at once, and practically, and answer aright!”

There has been one particular area in which it’s likely that we’ve all been aware that there is plenty of room for “greater works,” and that is working together, or what might be called collective demonstration: in families, church work, any kind of organizational work—in a church context or otherwise, in neighborhoods, in governments of all sizes, in nations, among the people, and in the world at large. Would you agree with me that these are areas that could benefit from the light of Truth, the touch of the Comforter—the healing and saving ministries of divine Love?

Might we be so bold as to think about tackling the environment? World peace? World hunger? If not, why not? If so, let's get on with it! Let us "then up and be doing," as our hymn says!

CONTEXT OF JESUS' PROMISE

I've found it helpful to look at the context of Jesus' promise that we will do greater works. This promise is found right in the middle of an extended conversation that Jesus has with his disciples just before his trial and crucifixion. It's really his last class session with them; in fact, some Christian Scientists liken it to Normal Class instruction, because he's preparing them to carry on the ministries required to go forward as his followers and as teachers for mankind. Love is the heart of the lesson. He says at least five times that they must love as he loved:

- A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you... (John 13:34).
- By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another (John 13:35).
- Continue ye in my love (John 15:9).
- This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (John 15:12).
- These things I command you, that you love one another (John 15:17).

Right in the middle of these directives about love, he tells them that he's leaving. But he accompanies this with a number of promises. Here's some of what he says. I've just picked out a few of the promises in John 14—see what you notice about them:

- In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
- **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (Is this a promise or a command or both?)**
- If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.
- And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
- The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

It sounds to me as if it's not our job to figure out what the greater works are or how we do them. It's the Comforter's job to do that! He will teach us all things and bring all things to our remembrance.

Every week in my full-text Bible lesson I highlight in one color what God's job is and in another color what my job is. It's very helpful. It keeps me on the straight and narrow and helps me cast off the burden of responsibility for what it is not mine to do! My job is usually easy, for example, in this week's lesson it includes:

- Seeing wondrous things from God's law
- Meditating on His works
- Delighting in the path of His commandments
- Loving His Word, keeping His precepts
- Receiving the spirit which is of God
- Knowing the things that are freely given to us of God
- Looking deep into realism instead of accepting only the outward sense of things
- Ascribing greatness unto God
- Considering in my heart that the Lord is God in heaven above
- Praising Him
- Speaking of the glory of His kingdom
- Letting the perfect model be present in my thoughts
- Employing truthful arguments and entertaining the spirit of Truth and Love
- Availing myself of God's rule in order to receive His blessing

You get it.

God's job is to be the Source, to guide and govern me, to give me what it takes to do my job:

- He teaches me His statutes
- Opens my eyes
- Makes me understand
- Restores health and heals me of my wounds
- Is all-powerful and ever-present
- Is good to all
- Sends every good gift and every perfect gift
- Comprehends and expresses all
- Created all through Mind and made all perfect and eternal
- Underlies, overlies, encompasses all true being

It's so helpful to have these reminders every week. Marking these jobs helps me pay attention to them and do my work. One thing is constant: it is not ever my job to tell God what His job is.

And as I've thought about Jesus promise that we will do greater works, I've been highlighting and paying more attention to all of His promises. I've learned that there is a divine law behind every promise.

Here are two promises I've heard this year, and the demands they involve:

- When I send you, I make the travel arrangements.
- There are no human decisions ... only divine direction.

As I've been focused on these promises, I've been more aware of promises directly from God to ME. After all, it's a promise that He makes MY way perfect! I pray for Him to open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things, that He makes Me understand the way of His precepts! Right?! Yes! For example, I was in Seattle in January when a blizzard threatened to keep me there for a few extra days. I received an email the night before I was to leave saying that my flight the next morning had already been cancelled. I was due in another city the next afternoon for workshops and events. It was about 10:00 at night, and I said out loud, "What should I do? Should I rent a car? Should I take a bus? Should I ski?!" I heard as loudly as if it were spoken through an amplification system, "Chris, I sent you on this trip. And when I send you, I make the travel arrangements. So you just go to bed and sleep."

In the morning, there was an email telling me that the airport had been closed until 11:00 a.m. and that I'd been booked on the first flight out at 11:20 a.m. I made my way to the airport and was on the flight when it took off, arriving at my destination in time for meetings and scheduled events. But even more amazing were the encounters that unfolded along the way—meetings with people whom it was VERY clear I was intended to meet for mutual blessing.

Another promise I heard recently was that "There are no human decisions, only divine direction." Wow! Has that been a wonderful promise. And I'm seeing the truth of it every day.

But, like Jesus' promise, both of these come with demands; we have to dispense with the world's ways and means, listen, and obey!

“PAY ATTENTION!”

It takes humility and patience to listen and hear the promises and then to obey and follow where they lead. It requires trust and gratitude. It takes a willingness to pay attention! Really close attention. Not just to what's going on around me, but to divine Mind.

After just a short time of paying closer attention to Jesus' promises, I started to realize that the Bible is FULL of promises. Are we paying attention to them?

- Certainly I will be with thee.
- He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee.
- There will be showers of blessing.
- He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.
- The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me..
- Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.
- Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.
- God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
- When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
- Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
- I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever

We are not alone—ever. We always are at one with divine Mind, the infinite Principle, eternal Love. This promise is repeated over and over in the Old and New Testaments.

Once we're awake, alert, paying attention, we begin to notice the promises, and we see that, while Jesus fulfilled many of them, he did not fulfill them all! And these may begin to hint at what's left for us to do in terms of “greater works”! For example:

There shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days...the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord (Isa. 65:20, 25).

And of course, in Revelation (21), there is a further vision that remains to be fulfilled:

- There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
- There shall be no more curse.
- There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.
- Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.
- Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
- Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

So then the questions that arise include:

- Do we have the open hearts and willing hands that our hymn talks about to meet the demands and commands??
- How about the eager ears? Are our ears big enough to hear these messages?
- Are our mental antennae tuned to the right channel, or are they picking up mostly the distortions and noise of personal sense?
- Are our hearts big enough to welcome these timeless promises, these hints at what is ready to be realized and then to cherish and ponder them?
- Are our hands big enough to hold onto these blessings, to work with them and share them with others? Are they ready to clap with joyous appreciation over the demands and the promise of their fulfillment?

Mrs. Eddy tells us to stretch thought to embrace infinity and eternity. “In league with material sense,” she says, “mortals take limited views of all things.” Have you noticed that we sometimes are more inclined to focus on the human and relative than to go to the divine, healing absolute?

Recently I was talking with a friend who was stuck in a circle of discouragement over not being able to help a family member who was struggling with a physical challenge because there was a claim of sin involved. My friend said to me that she had tried to reason with the dear one, reminding the family member that “the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.” As we talked, it became clear that that statement in the third tenet is a great help because it explains a lot about the human scene. Nope, we don’t get very far if we keep sinning. That’s correct: “The belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.” But this relative statement never healed anyone.

In the same Tenet, Mrs. Eddy reminds us, “We acknowledge God’s forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal.” Relative statements explain things, but they don’t heal. What heals is the clear conviction of the absolute truth expressed in the scientific statement of being, or in the two cardinal points of Christian Science: “the nothingness of material life and intelligence and the mighty actuality of all-inclusive God, good.”

Eradicate the image of disease from the perturbed thought before it has taken tangible shape in conscious thought, *alias* the body, and you prevent the development of disease. This task becomes easy, if you understand that every disease is an error, and has no character nor type, except what mortal mind assigns to it. By lifting thought above error, or disease, and contending persistently for truth, you destroy error (*Science and Health* 400:12).

Love does that! It’s BIG!

BIGGER BLESSINGS, GREATER WORKS

One synonym for “great” is “big.” “To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is BIG with blessings.” To those leaning on the absolute truth of being, every day is big with blessings, bursting with newness of life! How big with blessings are our days? How big is our concept of the blessings we might enjoy? How big is our concept of the blessings we might share with the world? After all, that word “blessings” can also be a verb! Today is big with blessing others! Outreach! Nursing!

In his second epistle to his friends in Corinth, Paul wrote:

Dear, dear Corinthians, I can’t tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn’t fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren’t small, but you’re living them in a small way. I’m speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively! (2 Cor. 6:11-13 *The Message*).

Let’s pay attention to this message of big! Of great! And of greater! Let’s open up our lives and live openly and expansively! Paul did! His mission changed from one that he firmly believed was God-centered and God-directed. But it yielded, and Paul yielded, from this lesser calling to the greater one. And he did the greater works of believing and following the Christ-ideal, of establishing churches, and reaching the Gentile world! If it weren’t for Paul’s embrace of this greater work, it’s pretty certain that we wouldn’t have Christianity today.

GREATER WORKS INVOLVE ALERTNESS TO THE STRATEGY OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM

A dear friend and mentor, Ralph Wagers, used to say that *the strategy of animal magnetism, the devil, would be to substitute the lesser for the greater and get us so involved in the lesser that we lose sight of the greater.*

If we're not paying attention, if we're not alert, we might fall for this trick of the devil to keep us so distracted by the lesser about our work. For instance there is the suggestion that we are "working for a living," instead of living to accomplish greater works, no matter what our human employment! The greater view is to see ourselves working for a spiritual purpose, to work the works of God. Christian Sciences nurses are called to do the greater works of giving, of charity, of true benevolence; they are called to do the greater works of identifying themselves and all mankind as manifestations, outpourings, of the one Mind. We can do this in any walk of life, whether it's selling chocolate, driving a cab, running a company, or being a mom. No matter what our human occupation looks like, we can unite with the purpose of blessing the world, being lifted up and drawing all men unto this higher, perfect view and its effects in healing and saving the world from sin and death, which is the stated purpose of our church. We can all identify with the Comforter's message of healing and nursing.

Both Jesus and Mrs. Eddy let their concept of their work unfold from a lesser to a greater sense of purpose.

Mrs. Eddy's sense of her mission enlarged as she went forward in her ministry to the world. If you look carefully at the "Historical Sketch" in the *Church Manual*, you'll see that on April 12, 1879, she and her Christian Scientist Association first organized what was named the "Church of Christ, Scientist." It was organized as "a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." Notice the words commemorate, reinstate, primitive, and lost.

How many of us are members of that church? None of us are members of that church. Mrs. Eddy dissolved that church in 1889, the same year she disbanded the Christian Scientist Association, closed the Massachusetts Metaphysical College and changed other aspects of the structure she had built. Here's part of what she says in the "Historical Sketch" in the *Manual* (18:12-6) about the reorganization and renaming of her church that was accomplished three years later:

On the twenty-third day of September, 1892, at the request of Rev. Mary Baker Eddy, twelve of her students and Church members met and reorganized, under her jurisdiction, the Christian Science Church and named it, THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST.

At this meeting twenty others of Mrs. Eddy's students and members of her former Church were elected members of this Church... The Church Tenets, Rules, and By-Laws, as prepared by Mrs. Eddy, were adopted.

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, IN BOSTON, MASS., is designed to be built on the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death; thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant.

This is the church of which we are members. Look at the difference in the two design statements! The first is to commemorate the word and works of Christ Jesus, to reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing. It looks back. It commemorates and reinstates. The second is so much greater—bigger—pregnant with newness and looking forward. It is to be built on Christ (not the Master) —the understanding and demonstration of ever-present Truth, Life and Love in the now, healing and saving the WORLD from SIN and DEATH. Those are greater works! The Mother Church's purpose is to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant. That's big. Really big. There is nothing limited or small about that.

Mrs. Eddy writes us in a number of places about her own mission and purpose in the context of this larger view; for example, she tells what the healing power of Truth is all about:

To-day the healing power of Truth is widely demonstrated as an immanent, eternal Science, instead of a phenomenal exhibition. Its appearing is the coming anew of the gospel of "on earth peace, good-will toward men." This coming, as was promised by the Master, is for its establishment as a permanent dispensation among men; but the mission of Christian Science now, as in the time of its earlier demonstration, is not primarily one of physical healing. Now, as then, signs and wonders are wrought in the metaphysical healing of physical disease; but these signs are only to demonstrate its divine origin, — to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world (*Science and Health* 150:4).

It is our job, and our privilege, to witness the fulfillment of that holy purpose. Both Christ Jesus and Mrs. Eddy have put it on our plates—squarely. Are we paying attention? Are we up to it? The Daily Prayer is just one example of where it is clear

that Mrs. Eddy had the greater works—peace on earth, the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world—in mind for us to witness actively:

Daily Prayer. SECT. 4. It shall be the duty of every member of this Church to pray each day: “Thy kingdom come;” let the reign of divine Truth, Life, and Love be established in me, and rule out of me all sin; and may Thy Word enrich the affections of all mankind, and govern them!” (*Manual* 41:19).

Clearly this is about everyone, everywhere! No exceptions! It’s fun to go through the Bible lesson each week and to note the “no exceptions” words all through it every week. Like ALL and ALWAYS and FOREVER and EVERYONE and FULL! These words hint at just how big the promises really are, and they call us to a higher sense of purpose and demonstration.

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy asks us a really wonderful question—a very big question—about how we think about the world. She challenges us to see beyond and love beyond the world’s view of itself when she follows the lead of Revelation:

The Revelator tells us of “a new heaven and a new earth.” Have you ever pictured this heaven and earth, inhabited by beings under the control of supreme wisdom (*Science and Health*, 91:1).

Have we pictured this new heaven and a new earth!?

We seem to live in a world of extremes, of polarization: a world of ups and downs, human opinions, and many minds; a world of limitation of all kinds, of hatred and confusion. It’s a picture that invites us to indulge discouragement on the one hand and anger on the other! But what’s really needed is love. Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:12, “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” This is translated in *The Message* as, “...nothing left of their love but a mound of ashes.”

Recently I was struggling with pictures of this kind, which seemed to be coming at me from all sides, when it occurred to me that one of the underlying beliefs in “this world” is change, variableness, confusion of not knowing what’s next because the world is so arbitrary and inconsistent. An angel came to the rescue and reminded me that reality is immutable, unchangeable, constant, very reliable. “Nothing changes here,” as our Hymn 148 says, and the Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Then the Comforter brought this passage to my remembrance:

During this final conflict, wicked minds will endeavor to find means by which to accomplish more evil; but those who discern Christian Science will hold crime in check. They will aid in the ejection of error. They will maintain law

and order, and cheerfully await the certainty of ultimate perfection (*Science and Health* 96:31).

This first gave me peace, and then it brought to light the blessing that was already at hand. It was, in fact, amazing, and it was clear evidence that going to the constancy of the Father is the only way to go forward!

Association of Organizations for Christian Science Nursing (AOCSN) meeting

The new heaven and the new earth Mrs. Eddy describes in the passage above is inhabited by beings under the control of supreme wisdom.

Some of us here today got a little picture of “beings under the control of supreme wisdom” in a healing we witnessed back in the Spring this year, when we glimpsed together the new heaven and the new earth. We were in St. Louis at a conference of Christian Science nursing organizations. Now, this is a group of friends who, for more than forty years, has struggled with issues of all kinds. These issues have tended to divide and disorient the group by substituting a focus on the lesser for the greater issue of the standard of love that is the really obvious common ground. Do you see the need for greater works here?!

It’s interesting that Jesus’ disciples didn’t always get along, either—before or after his ascension. They argued while he was with them about who would be greatest. They bickered after he’d gone about whether converts should be circumcised. So, it’s clear that demonstrating oneness, unity, agreement, would be an answer to his prayer, “that they may be one,” which he prayed aloud—so that they could hear him!—at the close of the Last Supper and just before he was arrested. Demonstrating this oneness would be a greater work!

So, back to the AOCSN. This group had been tasked a couple of years ago with arriving at an agreement concerning how their facilities would all be inspected and accredited in the future. In recent years, there had been more than one accrediting body, and The Christian Science Board of Directors had asked the facilities to form a single accrediting organization. The members of the two groups worked diligently over the course of two years. Their hope, their goal, and their effort were for more than agreement on the issue of accreditation; they sought healing of what appeared as irreconcilable differences.

The desire of many there was to demonstrate oneness of Mind. It was a desire, although truth be told, there was doubt among many that it could happen. It was not concession or compromise that was needed, but the realization that there is only ONE

MIND. The Biblical model that came to thought most prominently was the Pentecost, where “they were all of one accord, in one place.” They were not all coming together to become as one, but they were seeking to realize and demonstrate that the ONE MIND unfolds and expresses itself as each and all! Jesus’ prayer was answered. The vision of the Pentecost was fulfilled. And that’s what happened. You can read a bit more about it in the October 2012 *Journal* in an article entitled, “A Meeting We Will Never Forget.” The most interesting thing was that for at least forty years there had been a history of division in this group. But it dissolved in a moment. The moment came when a member stood for the healing and not for a concession. He was not willing to admit that it was not possible. With God, nothing is impossible. That was true Christian Science nursing in action—like Jesus, Paul, John, Mrs. Eddy—turning from the lesser and demonstrating greater works!

Picture this: you are a member of a group that desires unanimity to go forward, but which has decided that unanimity minus one or two will suffice, if the group feels it is necessary at any point. So when the first tough issue arises where it is clear that two of the facilities are in the “vehemently disapprove” camp, and everyone else is in the approval area, there is a clear feeling that there will need to be a unanimity minus two concession. What would you do? As it happened, just as the vote is being called, one member in the approval area moves his vote to join the two in the vehemently disapprove category, and everything had to stop. In that moment, everything changed. A healing resolution was sought and found, because one member insisted upon it! “One on God’s side is a majority” (Pul. 4:7). And the new heaven and the new earth appeared! Over the next several days, every issue was resolved with a unanimously favorable vote, and the group found itself completely “of one accord.”

I was in awe. I would not have believed it if I hadn’t been there. It gave me pause. And it alerted me to expect, and demand, and participate in, and nurture this kind of demonstration every day, and in ways that will bless the whole world—now—immediately. Why not?! Are we willing to be that one who insists on a healing resolution to divisions? To hunger? To environmental issues? That is the larger role of Christian Science nursing. And we are all nurses!

Immediately

What stands between us and that demonstration? Prayer will reveal what we need to see. Last summer on a Wednesday night at our branch church, the reader’s Bible selections were on instantaneous healing. He read a whole bunch from the gospel of Mark, and one of the trademarks of Mark is his repetitive use of the word

immediately. As I listened, it hit me that the word immediately combines “im,” which means “not,” and “mediate,” which means “between” (median and medium share this same root, of course). So immediately means “without anything in between.” Bingo! Jesus knew so clearly that there was nothing between God and man. He knew that the claims of time and space were not real separators of man from God, good. That the claim of mortality never can come between God and His children. Paul said it clearly, “Nothing can separate us from the love of God” (Rom. 8:39).

Jesus denied the belief of anything coming between God and His power expressed as the Christ. We, too, can see through the lying suggestion that anything can come between us and the demonstration of the oneness of God and all creation. Nothing can come between us and the great purpose we’ve been given—no time, no space, no lack of experience or inspiration, no fear or doubt, no personal sense—nothing!

There’s **nothing** between us and divine Love. And there’s nothing between us as church members, as fellow citizens of the kingdom, as Christian Science nurses—nurturing harmony, feeding hungry hearts with “peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father’s loving-kindness.” Jesus prayed for us to realize this immediacy, that there’s nothing between us and our God (John 17). He prayed for his followers,

- That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
- That they may be one, even as we are one:
- That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

There’s no “in between” in love.

Closing

We are called to witness the greater works Christ Jesus promised, to do them, to celebrate them, to move forward in the light of them. All this requires vision and patience, both of which are born of love! And it requires going to the Father, as Jesus did, listening for the Comforter, which brings all things to our remembrance—what Jesus said, what he did.

“With God nothing shall be impossible,” Gabriel tells Mary (Luke 1:37). The virgin birth was a greater work than ever before, or since! Are we paying attention?! Do we have that absolute faith that all things are possible to God, and to us as His reflection?

It's time to pay attention to what lies in "cradled obscurity" at Fern Lodge and in the lives of Christian Science nurses.

So, let's not mess around. Let's get on with the greater works. Fern Lodge and other Christian Science facilities remind us to stand as quiet, powerful examples of greater works. We can do that. Will you join me in paying attention?

"Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us...He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing" (Eph. 2:7, 10).

Thank you!



Christine Irby Williams first heard of Christian Science as teenager; she began reading *Science and Health* immediately, and had numerous early healings. Her love of the Bible became clearer when she was asked to teach an overview to the Christian Science nurses at Tenacre Foundation in Princeton, NJ. She went on to serve at Tenacre for 32 years, as instructor, Director of the School of Christian Science Nursing, President and CEO, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Her ministry involves giving inspirational talks, teaching Bible classes, addressing associations and conducting workshops on various subjects for Christian Science nursing organizations, camps, schools and branch churches. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of The Principle Foundation, a national organization that gives benevolent assistance for Christian Scientists.

She has published a testimony and 17 various articles in *Christian Science Sentinel* and *The Christian Science Journal*. Her recent audio contribution is in the September 1, 2012 issue of the *Sentinel* on what it means to be a Sentinel, and can be found at JSH-online.

Chris is in the full-time practice of Christian Science in Houston, TX, where she lives with her husband Calvin, and she continues to be very active in church.