FERN LODGE FOCUS - July 2004

Annual Meeting Reports

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PUTTING OUR LIVES ON THE LINE GEORGE STRONG, ADMINISTRATOR

A few years ago I offered to do some construction work for a friend, but severe back pain tempted me to feel I could not continue. Thanks to the trust I gained through nursing, I went to the job, confident that God would care for me. My offer to help was a simple expression of love, a desire to "bear...another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," (*Galatians* 6:2). By the end of the day I was free of pain. The "law of Christ" Paul spoke of is the law Jesus acknowledged when he gave his followers a new commandment. This is from the Bible translation, *The Message*, "Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another," (*John* 13:34).

A t a time when our church seeks to fulfill Christ's command to preach the gospel, it is vital that Christian Scientists give adequate proof that our preaching and practice are scientific and that they come from our Christianity. How will mankind know that we truly are followers of the Master? Jesus told us, and it's in the assurance immediately following his new commandment, "This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other," (John 13:35).

To be known as Christians, true Scientists, we must love each other, and show that love in ways that will be clearly seen and understood. This is important. We don't have to agree with each other on every theological point or on what is the best way to share Christian Science with others. And just getting lots of copies of *Science and Health* out into our communities is not enough.

No matter what else we do, we have to show our love for each other! How? Of course Jesus gives an answer, "This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends," (*John* 15:13). Putting your life on the line for your friends describes Christian Science nursing. This is what we do every day at Fern Lodge, put our lives on the line for our friends; your friends. We face fears expressed by patients, pictures of disease, lies of mortality, and and we help overcome them with confidence, affection and joy.

At this time we have some specific needs at the facility. Our nurse call system needs frequent service, and parts are not always available. Most of the beds in patient rooms were purchased about 25 years ago; they, too, are difficult to maintain and repair and should be replaced. We'll appreciate contributions for these purchases.

You can also help by coming to Fern Lodge and sharing your Christian affection with some new friends there. Our most recent newsletter included insights into volunteer work. We told of a friend who came to visit with patients and said, "If only more people would recognize the value of their presence and their prayers and come to Fern Lodge, what a healing influence that would be." She's right.

Think of the blessings that flow from Christian Science nursing! Nurses and volunteers encourage each patient's trust in the healing power of prayer. Seeing the healing effect of prayer strengthens the nurses' trust and increases their ability to heal. And the love that leads a Christian Scientist to care for others shows the world the depth of our church's Christianity.

Mrs. Eddy speaks of scientific Christianity as "the demonstration of divine Love casting out error and healing the sick," and adds that this "must be the case in the cycles of divine light," (*Science and Health* 135). Elsewhere she describes Christian Science as the "almost unconceived light of *divine Love,*" (*Message to The Mother Church, 1902,* 5:9). In the following article Dr. Laurance Doyle shares insights on the true nature of light in his talk, "The Light of the World."



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, A TALK BY LAURANCE DOYLE

Today I'd like to talk a bit about light. Light is what astronomers study; they don't get to do experiments in the laboratory like chemists or most physicists. They just have to make sure they are there watching when the experiment is done because they don't get to re-do it. Most of these experiments are done by stars. Today, of course, we are going to be discussing what light really is, the expression of God, God's ideas. I thought it might be of interest, however, to take a glance at what physicists currently think about light along the way, using some of these aspects as a springboard to bring out some aspects of the spiritual nature of light.

However, we should not confuse electromagnetic radiation with spiritual light. As Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H* 123: 14-16), "Metaphysics resolves things into

thoughts, and exchanges the objects of sense for the ideas of Soul." So, hopefully, this is what we can do today on the topic of light. It is a big subject—there are almost 200 references to light in the Bible, and

well over 500 references to light in the writings of Mrs. Eddy. So this will be just a short glance at a really, literally, infinite subject.

Einstein said that in his career he just wanted to study light; that was his goal. He also said that he discovered the Theory of Relativity by picturing himself as a photon, that is, as a particle of light, and what it would see traveling through the universe. Now one of the characteristics of light is that it does not have any opposite. There is no such thing as a particle of darkness. There are no dark photons; they do not exist.

As Mrs. Eddy writes (S & H 215: 15-18), "We are sometimes led to believe that darkness is as real as light; but Science affirms darkness to be only a mortal sense of the absence of light, at the coming of which darkness loses the appearance of reality." She then tells us that darkness of any kind—sin, sorrow, disease, and death—flee before the light as "phantoms of error."

There is never any struggle of light for dominion because it has no opposite. So, in a sense, light even from the physicist's standpoint—can illustrate the oneness of substance.

Another interesting aspect of light, according to the physicists, is that it does not weigh anything. Also, according to the Theory of Relativity, matter can never catch up to the speed of light. There are many other interesting aspects of light, but I'll just mention one more. As a physics colleague, Dr. Dave Carico, who used to teach at Principia College, pointed out to me, it's interesting that the human body, when the space is taken out between the molecules, would be almost too small to see in a

There is no such thing as a particle of darkness; never any struggle of light for dominion.

typical microscope. But it is kept "puffed up" by what is called "Coulomb repulsion."

What is interesting is that the transmission of the force of Coulomb repulsion is, again according to physicists, light. It's kind of fun to think, actually, that the human body is really quite insubstantial except that it is puffed up by light! This is also the reason a physicist would give for the planet Earth being bigger than a black hole, 1/2-inch across. Thus there are lessons about the insubstantiality of matter in the study of light.

I sometimes think it is helpful to start out by showing the unreliability of the material senses. I call these kinds of ideas, "An average cloud weighs 300 tons" ideas. We think we know what something is, but when we find that we don't know, we tend to be open, then, to new ideas about what we thought we knew. I was surprised clouds weighed so much when

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I first measured one as a youngster. Just put a bucket out during a rainstorm and let it collect about one square foot of water, weigh it, then weigh it empty, and then look at the news to see how many square feet got rained on and you have a pretty good idea of the weight of the cloud that carried that rain.

Mrs. Eddy writes in *Science and Health* (510: 27-28), "Light is a symbol of Mind, of Life, Truth, and Love, and not a vitalizing property of matter." I thought this was particularly interesting since, at the time she wrote this, I don't think matter and light were considered to be the same thing. It is almost as if she had written "Light is a symbol of Mind, of

Exodus (3: 2-3), "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." It was the light that got his attention, and he turned aside to understand it. This same light that illumined that bush would illumine Moses' face when he returned from getting the Ten Commandments. We read (*Exodus* 34: 29) "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his

> face shone while he talked with him." As the Psalmist put it (36: 9), "For with [God] is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light."

The Master took away any notion of sin being a cause, or even of having a past history.

Life, Truth, and Love, and not mc²." So let's now look into the true nature of light. And what better place to start the study of light than "in the beginning"?

According to *The Bible*, the first thing God said was "Let there be light," and the narration immediately adds, "and there was light" (*Genesis* 1:3). Perhaps we should say that the first thing that God <u>says</u> is, "Let there be light" for it is an ever present process, God creating the light of being. We then read, "And God saw the light, that it was good:" (*Genesis* 1: 4). So "good" and "light" might be thought of as the same thing. For God to speak, for infinite Mind to think, for unlimited Soul to feel, this is the one and only ongoing act of creation, the Source of all light, all ideas, all good, all reality. So the first act of creation, is God saying "Let there be light!"

Thinking about this topic, I realized that, in a way, Moses, Jesus, Paul, and Mrs. Eddy all started their careers with some aspect of light. We read in Christ Jesus' appearance on Earth was also foretold by light.

The wise men saw a star and followed it to the manger of the baby Jesus. Mrs. Eddy writes that (S&H vii: 10-12), "The Wisemen were led to behold and to follow this daystar of divine Science, lighting the way to eternal harmony." Christ Jesus said of himself (John 12:46), "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

Christ Jesus healed many people with light. When healing a man of blindness (John 9:1-7) he said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When his disciples saw a man blind from birth, they had asked Jesus, "...Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" They had assumed that the blindness was real, and so therefore thought it had a cause. Of course Jesus corrected this thought. He said, "...Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, that the works of God should be made manifest in him." He took away any notion of sin being a cause, or even of having a past history. That's when he said, "I am the light of the world."

... A TALK BY LAURANCE DOYLE

Then Jesus did something that seemed to be a bit unusual amongst his other healings. We read (*John* 9: 6-7), "When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.)" Then it says of the blind man, "He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing." The man had now been enlightened by the Christ!

As I thought about this healing, the idea came that Christ Jesus was always teaching; everything he said or did was instruction in spiritual reality. Perhaps he was acting out a parable in this case. As some people have already pointed out, spitting on something meant, at least, a disregard for it.

When Jesus spat on the ground and anointed the man's eyes, and then asked him to go wash in the pool of Siloam, perhaps he was indicating—for the enlightenment of his disciples as well as the man that the Adam-man, made of dust, needed to be seen through, as never having been the real, perfect man

of God's creating. Jesus instructed the man to purify his concept of eyes, didn't he? He told him to wash off the clay, see through the clay concept of sight, and this purification of thought would reveal the light that was always true of the real, perfect man of God's, not man's creating.

The disciples must have learned something from this, because later Jesus said that they too, expressed this Christ, Truth. Imagine Christ Jesus saying to you, "Ye are the light of the world"! (*Matthew* 5:14).

Another time Christ Jesus spoke of himself as light was when he healed the woman taken in adultery (*John* 8: 3-12). The Pharisees had brought to him a woman taken in adultery asking him if she should be stoned. He replied, "...he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This was an air-tight argument, for it is clearly a sin to see a sinner. (Sin, by the way, comes from an old archery term meaning "to miss the mark.") Those that were thinking sinning thoughts could not cast a stone, and those that were not thinking sinning thoughts would not see anyone to throw a stone at!

Christ Jesus once said (John 12: 47), "...I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Well if Jesus could not judge, how can I? Jesus, seeing the woman's perfect spiritual selfhood, told her that he did not condemn her either. He saw that the sin was no part of her real selfhood. He said, "Go, and sin no more." In a way, one might say he was telling the woman, "You are free. Now go and aim much higher, and don't miss the mark this time!" We read, "... Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." So Christ Jesus came not to judge the world. Why did he come? He said (John 10:10), "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Christ Jesus was always teaching; everything he said or did was instruction in spiritual reality.

Marc Engler, a Christian Science teacher who was Treasuer of the Mother Church once said, "Criticism is your public declaration that you have failed to see man in God's image and likeness." So if we decide we can judge another, we mistake our own purpose in being here; we actually miss the mark. Instead of just judging another, show them the Christ way that they can have life, and have it more abundantly. Then you too are "the light of the world."

You may have read about Paul's introduction to Christianity. With an influx of enlightenment, he

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saw how blind he had been. And I think it is so great that the first thing he said to God upon hearing that he had been opposing rather than helping was (*Acts* 9: 06), "...what wilt thou have me to do?" Well, as we read in Acts, the light of Christianity healed him too, and he became a great expression of this light.

When Mary Baker Eddy was first writing *Science* and Health with Key to the Scriptures some aspects came with light, as well. She talks about a "coincidence" of "the light of revelation with solar light." She writes (*Miscellany* 114: 16-23), "I could not write these notes after sunset. All thoughts in the line of Scriptural interpretation would leave me until the rising of the sun. Then the influx of divine remember sitting on the edge of the bed and feeling more and more grounded, more and more healthy. It felt just like the mist coming off a road when the sun rises—only faster. Anyone who has experienced a Christian Science healing will know what I mean. Within about two minutes, I was completly healed. My joy and sense of adventure were back, I felt so humbly grateful, and I glimpsed how strongly God holds each of our identities intact—in the palm of His hand, was the image I felt.

As I thought about this healing, I pictured the so loving practitioner, there in San Diego, and me, here in Manous, Brazil—thousands of miles apart. Then I thought, Why everyone in between must also have

We are all "the light of the world." We were made to shine with the light of the Christ.

interpretation would pour in upon my spiritual sense as gloriously as the sunlight on the material senses." In this book she talks about Christ Jesus' example "illuminating" the Scriptures (S & H 501:7-13). She writes, "The incarnation of Truth, that amplification of wonder and glory which angels could only whisper and which God illustrated by light and harmony, is consonant with ever-present Love."

I had an opportunity to experience the ever presence of this "wonder and glory," this "light and harmony" of ever-present Love. With a friend, I was down in the Amazon river region, rather deep in the woods. I had been out on a boat all day, in the river, and hiking, but when I returned seemed to be quite ill. My friend helped me call a Christian Science practitioner in San Diego, but the line was not clear and she finally said, "I can't hear you honey. But you can know that divine Love is there too, and I'll get right to work. I'm hanging up now."

Well let me tell you, as quickly as it takes to get back in bed I didn't feel like being in bed any more. I gotten healed too!! Well, clearly the ever-present Christ did not have to travel at super speed from San Diego to Brazil. But the sentiment was correct; there is no such thing as a "local" healing.

Every Christ-healing we have heals the world too.

Christ Jesus said (*Luke* 11:33), "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light." Mrs. Eddy writes, ($S \oslash H 250$: 12-13), "Man is not God, but like a ray of light which comes from the sun, man, the outcome of God, reflects God." So in the final analysis, we are all "the light of the world." And God did not make us to be put "in a secret place, or under a bushel"; we were made to shine throughout the whole world, with the light of the Christ.



Dr. Laurance Doyle is a Christian Scientist and has lectured for the Christian Science Church and written for its periodicals. He has a doctorate in astrophysics and has taught courses on astronomy, quantum physics, thermodynamics, native American history and the history of science.

HEALING AND LEARNING - SHARON STRONG, DIRECTOR OF NURSING

"Don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort" (1 Cor 15:58, from The Message, a translation of the Bible). A day at Fern Lodge includes study of the Bible Lesson. Robin Barben, our part time Activities Director, part time nurse, assists with study, sharing research and asking patients how they can apply what they have been reading to problems during the day. Many wonderful insights and healings have resulted from this. There is a general increase in receptivity to Truth, a continued softening of character in several patients, and more trust in God, good. "Spiritualizing thought NOW, seeing Heaven here NOW has been an inspiring theme in the activities.

This thought came out in one of the Bible Lesson activities: "We are not walking with walkers, we are walking with God. We are not looking through windows at Fern Lodge, we are looking through windows of opportunity. We are not surrounded by walls at Fern Lodge, we are surrounded and encompassed by the very presence of God's almighty power, and so on."

ur nurses are reading Mary Baker Eddy's *Miscellaneous Writings* together. Many nuggets in that compilation are helping to deepen and expand our concept of caring for others in the most Christianly scientific way. Our nurses are so dedicated, too. Several go to home cases after working a full shift in the facility. Their steadfast affirmation of Truth and determination to see patients in their true spiritual selfhood, has certainly contributed to many healings like the following:

A woman came with a leg that needed cleansing and bandaging; she was healed of that condition after several months. Another individual arrived with an injured shoulder due to a fall at home. After three days she asked to keep the sling off and began using her arm normally. She soon returned home. A gentleman came from a hospital, where he'd been taken without his permission after a fall. He was wobbly and using a walker, and had been given a serious diagnosis. In two weeks, he no longer needed the walker, in 3 weeks began attending the Hayward church on Sundays. He returned home eager to continue his in-depth study of Christian Science. Through "pouring in truth through floodtides of Love," a patient has changed from being fearful and disoriented to more loving and content. Another recovered completely from a serious breathing problem.

Our nursing education program continues, and several nurses are working on their applications for *Journal*-listing. Our branch church care workshops will resume in the near future. They've been on hold due to our busy-ness at the facility.

rursing education is being provided in other ways, also. Three women with young families, living 2-4 hours away, asked if it was possible to learn nursing without commuting to a facility. We said yes! I meet with them once a month in a home 3 hours away for two days, learning and practicing skills, and sharing wonderful inspiration and insights on nursing topics. The husbands baby-sit and are wonderfully supportive as they learn the benefits the entire family receives from this education. Between sessions, we e-mail questions and fruitage. It's a joy to be instructing three fine metaphysicians with gentle, loving hearts. That idea sparked a similar approach for two sisters in the Philippines who are waiting for visas to come and learn nursing. We have mailed them basic information and reading assignments, and they are practicing a few simple skills with a nurse nearby.

Thank you to all of the practitioners, nurses, and friends of Fern Lodge who have made valuable contributions to the healing activity of Christian Science nursing! If you want to be part of the spiritual growth, the "always abounding in the work of the Lord" healing activity at Fern Lodge, please see one of us after the meeting. We welcome nursing students, nurses, and volunteers at any time!

Thank you for your help! Bob Burch, Fern Lodge Treasurer

It is a privilege to thank those of you who have been so generous with both your metaphysical and financial support this last year. Whenever I think about Fern Lodge I feel a deep sense of gratitude. Of course I am grateful for financial support, but I am even more grateful for the presence of Fern Lodge in the Christian Science community.

The mission of Fern Lodge is to offer Christian Science nursing for any individual who relies wholly on Christian Science for healing. Please let me repeat that. The mission of Fern Lodge is to offer Christian Science nursing for *any* individual who relies wholly on Christian Science for healing.

Fern Lodge is a benevolent organization. We offer nursing care without regard for the length of time care is required or an individual's ability to pay the full cost. We are able to do this only because of the donations we receive for this purpose.

More than 80 percent of the dear ones who are in need of Christian Science nursing care are unable to pay the full amount for their care. It costs \$225 a day, about \$6,850 per month, to stay at Fern Lodge. I think you have to agree that is very reasonable. Yet there are many dedicated Christian Scientists who find themselves unable to cover the full expense. Therefore there is an on-going need at Fern Lodge.

The cost to operate Fern Lodge this year will be almost \$1,900,000. Like all businesses our costs are always increasing. In spite of our energy conservation programs and other cost cutting efforts over the past few years, our utility bills have almost doubled. Facility insurance costs have risen from \$12,000 to \$46,000 annually. There has been much said in the news about workers compensation insurance, and rightly so. We will pay nearly \$100,000 for that insurance coverage this year.

For Fern Lodge to fulfill its mission of providing Christian Science nursing care it is important that we continue to receive financial support. Our current need is for about \$84,000 per month, or one million dollars for this year.

We all know it is right that we are able to pay for the goods and services we use. But most of all, the Fern Lodge Board of Directors believes that it is vital that we are able to continue to share our love for nursing and our understanding of the nature of care and the vital role it plays in Christian Science healing and in our church.

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