

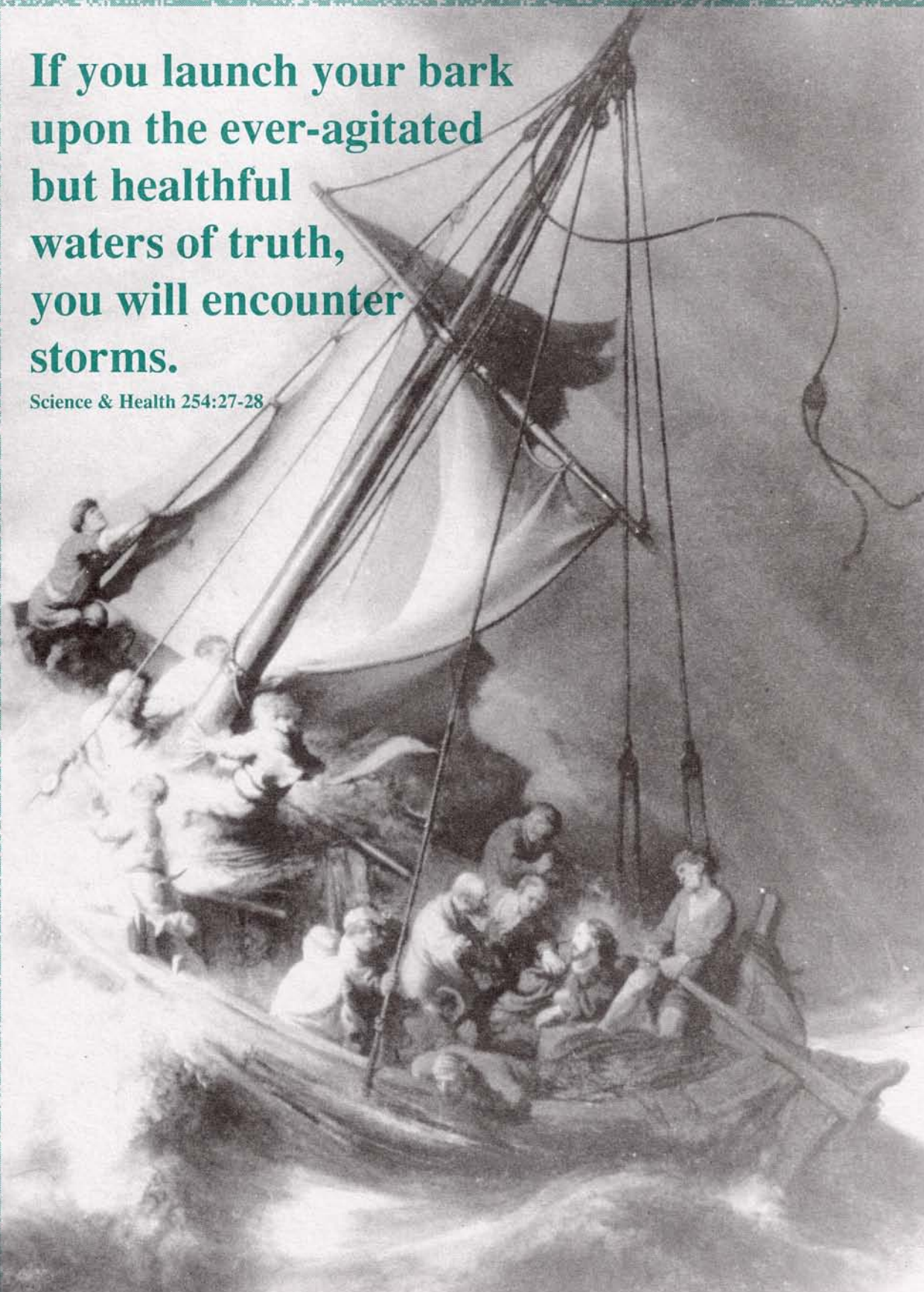
# Focus

March 1990

## Fern Lodge

**If you launch your bark  
upon the ever-agitated  
but healthful  
waters of truth,  
you will encounter  
storms.**

Science & Health 254:27-28





## You Will Encounter Storms

Our cover picture is a rendering of Rembrandt's painting, *Storm on the Sea of Galilee*. It illustrates a familiar Bible story, a storm raging and the disciples fearing for their lives, while Jesus slept peacefully on board. The disciples wondered then, and many still wonder today, how is it possible to have calm in the middle of a storm? This question is of interest to us at Fern Lodge, because, as the cover quotation from *Science and Health* says, those who set sail on the agitated waters of truth will encounter storms. These storms may appear sometimes as hurricanes or tornadoes, but frequently they will be the too common storms of sickness, disease, or emotional discord. Those who call Fern Lodge for Christian Science nursing help frequently feel threatened by these storms of sense. Is their call for aid evidence of a failure on their part?

Sadly, we sometimes hear it said that those who need nursing care just didn't do their own work well enough — if they were really good Christian Scientists, they would have stayed away from trouble. Is it failure in our daily work that leads to the need to call for help from a Christian Science practitioner or nurse? Does a person find himself in need only because he went the wrong way? Wouldn't it be better never to be in a position where there are aggressive conditions to be dealt with?

Stephen Gottschalk relates this story in his book, *The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life*, p. 128. Clara Shannon, a student of our Leader, tells of a household meeting where Mrs. Eddy, "described to her students a beautiful white bridge, underneath which was all manner of

slime, mud, venomous reptiles, beasts, and all that was unclean. What path, she asked, would you take? Would you go over the white bridge or under it? Her students responded that they would go over the bridge. But this was just the wrong choice, she explained: they would go over it only after they had been underneath — 'The whole of mortal mind must be overcome first.'" It occurs to us that anyone who is willing to go under that bridge may well at times need reassurance of his or her true being as a loved child of God, always secure and out of danger. The tender care of Christian Science nursing can bring a present sense of God's Father-Motherhood, of the enfolding arms of divine Love. At these times a nurse can offer comfort and healing aid.

Is it hard to help, to be prepared to nurse? Nursing requires the inspiration and the consecration, the reverence for good, that come with prayer. Nursing happens when human thought is receptive to the Christ. So, it's not hard to be ready to nurse. It's divinely natural for anyone who prays, and who applies the understanding of Christian Science in his or her daily life. Mrs. Eddy writes, "A knowledge of the Science of being develops the latent abilities and possibilities of man." (*Science and Health*, 128:14-16) The ability to nurse certainly is no exception.

The word *nurse* means to nourish, nurture, cherish, attend, and take care of. These activities and qualities of thought are commonly associated with mothering. Through the understanding of Christian Science we can see them as the manifestation, the evidence, of God's mothering care for man.

God is Mind, and Man is the full representation of Mind, (see *Science and Health*, 591:5). God is Father-Mother. So man is the full representation of Motherhood. Nursing, like mothering, is a human manifestation of the Motherhood of God; it gives evidence of the human and divine coincidence; it is an active expression of Christ, of “divinity embracing humanity in Life and its demonstration, — reducing to human perception and understanding the Life which is God” (*Science and Health*, 561:16).

Remember Jesus’ example at the last supper with his disciples? He washed their feet; he expressed his affection for them in a way they could understand. And at that time Jesus told his disciples to follow his example in their lives, to wash one another’s feet (*John* 13:3-17). This new instruction was in addition to Jesus’ previous admonitions to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Just as the disciples were to demonstrate the power of God to heal and save mankind, they were also to demonstrate the human affection that would make Christ understandable as the manifestation of God — the way of Life known as the expression of Love.

In Jesus’ time washing another’s feet was a very loving thing to do. People frequently walked wherever they went, and the roads were hot and dusty. The affectionate act of washing another’s feet was a humble example of service to one’s fellow-man. It would show that the disciples recognized the needs of others and that they were willing to help meet those needs. In a similar way today, the willingness to nurse shows our genuine affection for others, and

in this way helps us to be faithful followers of the Master, Christ Jesus.

To follow our Master we must express that genuine affection for our fellow man that gives evidence of infinite Love. In his first epistle John wrote, “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (*I John* 4:20) This passage is quoted by Mrs. Eddy in *Science and Health* (366:12), and the context is of special interest to us. She adds, “Not having this spiritual affection, the physician lacks faith in the divine Mind and has not that recognition of infinite Love which alone confers the healing power.”

How well do we understand that a lack of human affection indicates a lack of faith in the divine Mind? Do our actions demonstrate that we recognize the importance of this spiritual affection to the recognition of divine Love and the healing power it alone confers? Can we “go into all the world” and “heal the sick” without this practical affection, and without the caring activity that springs from it? Christian Science nursing is one manifestation of that practical affection that both recognizes and gives evidence of divine Love.

George Strong  
Administrator

# A Day With The Beloved Disciple, John.....

*A Day With The Beloved Disciple, John* exceeded all our expectations. For the over 300 that attended, the Gospel of John has taken on a much greater depth and clarity. Connie Stricklin, our visiting Bible scholar from Massachusetts, spoke to a capacity audience on January 13th at the Marine's Memorial Club in San Francisco. Included with the talk was a lovely luncheon.

We can't begin to summarize this day, but would like to share some parts that especially touched people who attended.

Mrs. Stricklin feels the Gospel of John is the most spiritual, original and advanced, and differs from the other three Gospels in style, content and emphasis. She helped us to grasp better the differing purposes of each of the four Gospel writers:

Matthew shows Jesus as a learned Rabbi, who came to teach men the truth about God and man.

Mark shows Jesus as a conqueror of every belief and every force that tried to oppose him.

Luke depicts Jesus as the great humanitarian, who reaches out and touches every life with his healing power.

John goes beyond the facts of Jesus' life and interprets the meaning of Jesus' life on earth. The literal facts of his life, and even the healings themselves, have little significance for John unless what they mean is understood.

Put another way, Matthew's Gospel is like a perfectly balanced ledger, Mark's like a victorious military campaign, Luke's like a beautiful painting, and John's like a symphony for full orchestra.

*I loved how Mrs. Stricklin explained the meaning of Jesus' changing water to wine and cleansing the temple, both indicated the end of the old order and that a new revolutionary order was about to begin.*

John, a Palestinian Jew, was reputed to be a Sadducee from a priestly family in Galilee. Galileans were rough and tough and said what they thought. But John, always watching and thinking, never used words casually. He wrote a literary masterpiece using a minimum of words to state the most profound truths. He relates Jesus' own words to tell what he proclaimed about himself as Son of God. According to John, the healings are signs Jesus gave, and his spiritual explanation of

what they signified gave testimony that he was sent by God.

All four of the Gospel writers understand the crucifixion and resurrection as Jesus' ultimate miracle or sign, the culmination of his life work. But for John, it is much more. It demonstrated eternal life in Christ—that real life that knows no death. This is what Jesus proved by offering his own human life to be crucified. In the first three Gospels, Jesus was sacrificed by others. In John's Gospel it was a self-sacrifice. Jesus offered himself on the cross.

In John there is none of the tragic agony we find in the other gospels. As John knew him, Jesus never pleaded with God to spare him from his ordeal. No "take this cup from me," no great drops of blood, no agony, no



questioning. John saw Jesus in complete control, because he did the will of the Father from start to finish.

The keynote of John's Gospel is "the word made flesh" (John 1:14). Jesus, a fleshly man who came at the right moment in history, was sent by God to manifest the divine nature of Christ as God's expression.

The theme of John's Gospel is eternal life in Christ to all who believe. Eternal life is not just life that lasts forever, not even just life that has no beginning and end, but eternal life in Christ is without any sense of time whatever. You don't wait until after death to find out what eternal life is. Eternal life in Christ is already the present reality of being for all who believe in Christ. Over and over again, from the first to the last chapter, John emphasizes this theme of eternal life in Christ as the present fact of being for all who spiritually understand what Jesus did and said.

In an exegesis of John 21:15-17, after the morning meal, Mrs. Stricklin told us that John uses two different Greek words for love, two for *feed*, and two for *sheep*, and each word has a distinct meaning.

Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love (*agapao*, the totally unselfed love of Christ) me more than the other disciples?" Peter feels a much more personal and emotional bond to Jesus and answers, "Thou knowest that I love (*philio*, the love of a brother for a brother) thee." Jesus says

*Mrs. Stricklin did not lecture, but shared things she knew and loved.*

*It was like hearing the minute details and inner meaning of a magnificent story.*

to Peter, "Nourish (give mother's milk to) my little lambkins (new converts with budding understanding)."

Jesus says the second time, "Simon, lovest (*agapao*) thou me?" Peter, not understanding, replies again, "Yes, Lord I have

the deepest sense of affection (*philo*) for you." So Jesus replies, "Guide, shepherd, take care of the mature sheep."

He says the third time, "Simon lovest (*philio*) thou me?" Jesus has given up by this time and decides to take what is there and work with it. So he doesn't use *agapao* anymore, he uses *philio*. It is as if Jesus is saying, if you have that deep, strong affection that would do anything for me, I'll accept that. "Then

feed (nourish with the mother's milk) my sheep (the whole flock, the whole congregation)." Don't leave anybody out.

This gives us a good example, Mrs. Stricklin said, of what Christian love is versus what ordinary human love is. It's the new sense of *agapao* which tenderly nourishes and cares for the entire flock at every stage of their progress, the newcomers, the little ones, the children growing up, as well as right through to the seasoned workers, the ones who have been working in the field for years and years. Don't forget them!

# Fern Lodge, Christian Science Nursing,

The Benevolence Fund at Fern Lodge was conceived to help defray the cost that comes with accepting patients who receive financial aid from the Medi-Cal welfare program. This monthly cost is now paid solely from donations.

We also have some far-reaching goals.

First, through the Benevolence Fund we would like to help patients to be free from reliance on Medi-Cal. This government program requires practitioners to report on the condition of patients. The reports filed are based on physical observation, and therefore they are not consistent with the practice of Christian Science. It compromises our affirmation of the presence of health when we describe the appearance of disability, and state that such a condition appears to be on-going, just to help an individual qualify for financial aid.

Replacing dependance on Medi-Cal will require a total of \$45,000 each month over the payments we now receive from patients. Please remember it is not Fern Lodge that needs the benevolence funds we speak of; we could just change our admission policy to accept only those patients with funds to pay for their care. The benevolence we are telling you about is being requested by dedicated Christian Scientists who have come to Fern Lodge for help in a time of need.

As our next goal, we would like to see a fund established that would offer assistance for those whose nursing needs do not necessitate being in a facility. Too often it is just a lack of funds to pay for needed care that leads a person to leave his or her home and go to an institution. We know this is wrong, and see a broader Benevolence Fund for Care as able to help prevent it. Those who give to this fund would be offering financial assistance to all in our area who need help to pay for care.

Our goals are formidable, but as we affirmed at last year's Fern Lodge Annual Meeting, *There is nothing too hard for the Lord*. Your prayer and your work can help us attain these goals. Here's how you can take part in Christian Science nursing and support Fern Lodge.

- Nurse — your family, your church and your community — in your own individual ways. Your greatest help springs from your Christianity. The care we offer for one another, along with the demonstration of healing prayer, manifests Christian affection and shows the world that Christian Scientists truly follow Christ as demonstrated by Jesus. As Christian Scientists express the loving care that is theirs as children of an all-caring God, Love, we will see Christian Science nursing as an increasingly active support to people throughout the world.

This nursing does not happen only at accredited facilities such as Fern Lodge. Much of the nursing care offered to and by Christian Scientists is given by loving individuals who respond to calls for help from those they live and work with. These people are not trained Christian Science nurses, but the care they provide is the same in quality as that available in a facility. God gives "skill in comfort's art" to those who ask Him, and the affection expressed by these caring people may keep those they help from needing the services of a trained nurse, and may well allow them to stay at home instead of going to an institution in time of need.

- Include the expression of nursing qualities and activities in your concept of church. Mary Baker Eddy says that Church in its highest significance is "the structure of Truth and Love." The love expressed as nursing must have its source in this structure; it must "proceed from divine Principle." The inspired work of Christian Science nurses is an elevating, rousing and healing activity, and therefore this work has a place in the institution of Church. At Fern

# and You

Lodge we remind ourselves continually that it is the role of nursing in Church that ensures our success in healing and our progress. Fern Lodge is not an alternative to Church, it is a facility operated by and for Christian Scientists who want to take part in or contribute to the nursing services offered by Mother Church members.

As we strengthen our commitment to Church and seek ways and means to contribute to Church activities we will find ourselves living “for all mankind,” embracing the world with healing prayer. Give to The Mother Church in support of its caring work in the world to day. When you have given, you may also want to support the work done by Christian Science nurses at Fern Lodge. We are grateful for donations to the Benevolence Fund or for patients’ current benevolence needs.

- Share what you know about Christian Science nursing and Fern Lodge. Frequently nursing care needs can and should be met in an individual’s own home and in the care of family or friends, but there are times when a Christian Science nurse and/or a nursing facility can offer helpful aid. Such aid may be the answers to some questions over the phone or the loan of nursing equipment. It may include a visit to the home and nursing assistance from a Visiting Nurse. There are five active Visiting Nurse Services in Northern California that stand ready to serve.

If a refuge is needed from the cares of maintaining a home or from a mental atmosphere that is not supportive of Christian Science prayer and treatment, Fern Lodge or another nursing facility can be a haven in a storm. Dedicated nurses on our staff will encourage, nurture and cherish Christian healing and the present fact of wholeness, health, with everyone who comes to us for nursing care. We strive to offer a mental atmosphere that acknowledges the power of

God to maintain His image, man, in perfect harmony now and forever. And we promise to show the kindness and respect that demonstrate our love for each of His precious children.

- Tell us what you think about the idea of a Benevolence Fund for Care that would be available to those relying on Christian Science for healing who need nursing care, wherever they may be. We have heard much encouragement whenever we have spoken about such a fund. Ultimately it seems best for a broad-based Fund for Care to be independent of any facility, since one desired outcome of such a fund would be to emphasize the individual nature of financial assistance. Perhaps it is the role of Fern Lodge to establish the fund we envision, but we hope that others will be inspired to take an active part in fulfilling this goal.

Organizing and implementing a fund of this scope and magnitude may seem to be a challenging task. But our one real task is to maintain our ever-present awareness that God alone cares for man and provides His qualities to meet all human needs. The care given by a Christian Science nurse for someone in need is an expression of the Christian love Jesus recommended to his followers. In a similar way the provision of funds to pay the cost of nursing care for someone in need is an expression of the brotherly love that characterizes Christianity.



# Friends ask, Why Fern Lodge? I reply...

Because Fern Lodge is a spiritually demanding environment that allows me to express myself freely without having to battle institutional structure and politics.

Here is what I see as a worker. Fern Lodge has just those rules that seem necessary to ensure orderly communication. The primary rule is always the requirement to be Christian. You are required to look at yourself, your actions, and the results of your actions. Is what you see the image of God's creation? If not you must ask yourself, "how can I improve?" You rarely have the time to rest on your laurels. Then again, why should you ever want to?

Fern Lodge puts the rules of "wisdom, economy, and brotherly love" to the test. Not the test of the humanly wise, economic, and friendly, but the test of the wisdom of Mind, the economy of Spirit, and the love of Love. Each step of progress at Fern Lodge has sprung from listening to God's direction. At times the direction appears to be beyond what can be accomplished. This forces us to rise beyond human reason to do what God requires. The lives of Christ Jesus and Mrs. Eddy give examples of the blessings gained by relying on God's direction rather than reasoning from mere human appearances.

Fern Lodge requires us as students of Christian Science to do our duty and pray effectively.

If fund raising were what Fern Lodge is all about then it would be doomed to failure. What the Lodge is really about is Christian giving. We continually review what we should be doing to support the Christian Science nursing ministry. Since the goal is good and the motive is right we need to know that there are no hindrances.

*Millions of unprejudiced minds—simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert—are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ's name, and never fear the consequences. ...Those ready for the blessing you impart will give thanks.*



*The waters will be pacified, and Christ will command the wave.*

*Science & Health 570:14-18, 23-25*

What hindrances would mortal mind throw our way? Try these:

- a lack of funds to cover payroll and bills,
- a shortage of quality nursing staff, and
- a waiting list that continues to put deserving people on hold.

Can we allow ourselves to be impressed by this scene? Absolutely not!

The first items appear to be beliefs of lack. The last item appears to be an excess demand. Remember beliefs are just beliefs; they can be changed. But we wouldn't want to just change one set of human beliefs for another. We must exchange them for the understanding of the truths of Soul, Spirit, God. Love's demand is for Love's supply. There is nothing Love asks for that Love is not giving. The good results of correct, consistent prayer always have come to Fern Lodge in the past and we expect them always to come in the future.

"Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need." I have gazed at this quotation on the wall in church, and recently it took on new meaning. The "always has met" covers all the blessings God already has given. The "always will meet" covers all the blessings that are to come. So what happened to the now? The now is the demand on us for demonstration. It is our responsibility to pray now, listen now, receive direction now, and to act now on the impulse of God's communication. It is our job to realize the nowness of God's demands and the nowness of God's supply.

Peter Dempsey  
Development Committee