

# “Claim Your Own Experience”

Excerpts from a Talk Given at Fern Lodge by  
Marjorie Dagnall, C.S.

Claiming your own experience means knowing what that experience is and defending your right to have your *own* experience and not to be influenced by the experience of others.

Jesus is quoted in Matthew's gospel, “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:37,38). It seems to me that the harvest has to be the acceptance of our own Christliness. The harvest must be our own true selfhood, our own experience. And you notice that we're admonished to gather, not to plant. We spend a lot of time planting. Jesus didn't say plant, — the idea was the field is white, ready for harvest. Go in and harvest! But how do you harvest? By using the qualities of God. It seems to me that the workers are the qualities of God expressed in individual thought.

However, sometimes we are inclined to let those qualities of thought be misused by viewing them as mortal tools. Then they are employed as human agents of willful thinking and are often brought in to defend past feelings and experiences which mortality attempts to push off on us as

ours. If these unilluminated places of thought are accepted as our own, and if they gain acceptance in our thought as various unhealed, long-standing conditions of disappointment, sorrow or lack, we might feel some measure of defense is necessary to keep them from surfacing and causing us pain. So, sometimes we use human thinking to defend our “humanhood.” We could view this as leaving “soldier-thoughts” to defend old unhealed wounds and beliefs. We then go forth to each day's activity with a steadily decreasing “work force.” Why not call these human “soldier-thoughts” home by giving the past back to God. From a fresh new start we can begin to use those qualities of God-like thinking right here and apply them to our present experience right now. Then we are actually claiming our own experience and harvesting the good already present in our experience.

More and more I'm seeing the importance of you claiming your own unique mission and going forward with a great sense of authority and power. The glory of Christian Science is in that wonderful sense that each of us follows our own path. And how greatly guided and shepherded we are during this unfoldment in which glory leads

*continued*



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The Nursing Department at Fern Lodge is committed to upholding the standard of Christian Science nursing. To continually improve our expression of those qualities with which God cares for His children, we strive to keep a clear concept of our standard in thought as we work. As our dear Leader says, "We must form perfect models in thought and look at them continually, or we will never carve them out in grand and noble lives" (*Science and Health* 248: 26-29). What is our model, what is our standard, and where do we look for our example?

Further insight can be gained by looking again to Mrs. Eddy's teachings. She writes, "Mortal thought must obtain a better basis, get nearer the truth of being, or health will never be universal, and harmony will never become the standard of man" (*Science and Health* 553:6). And, "The standard of perfection was originally God and man" (*Science and Health* 470:18-19). Christian Science nursing is an activity which provides wise and loving support to an individual relying on God for care and healing. Christian Science nurses pray continually for the discernment which enables them to see harmony right where there seems to be discord, disease, and fear. The perfect model held in thought is man, the image and likeness of God, whose being is harmonious, whole, and joyous. This does not imply that our nurses are giving Christian Science treatment to patients at Fern Lodge, but rather that they

establish in thought their own identity as God's idea. Then they can work with the knowledge that, in the truth of being, they see only what God sees, hear only what God hears, and do only what God does.

Having the standard of perfection as our model and looking at it continually, we can trust God, through Christ, to guide us in our human activities. Christian Science nurses depend on this guidance as they work, and they trust God to lead them to discern how they can be of assistance in helping patients maintain their cleanliness, dignity, and freedom.

"The Foundation for Christian Science Nursing" statement from The Mother Church, which is published in the *May Journal*, calls attention to the *Church Manual By-law* for the Christian Science Nurse as the standard for Christian Science nursing. In previous issues of the Fern Lodge *Focus* we have shared thoughts about the different aspects of the *Manual By-law*, and we will continue to write about how we strive to uphold this standard of nursing in our work at Fern Lodge. Now we would like to encourage our readers and supporters to search for themselves to discover the implications of both the *Manual By-law* and the Foundation Statement. If you have any comments or questions about Christian Science nursing or about Fern Lodge, we will be glad to hear from you.



## "Claim Your Own Experience" *continued*

to glory. It may look as though suffering leads to suffering, but it's really glory to glory. You've got to see that it's perfectly safe to do whatever comes as your unfoldment. It's not safe not to do it.

Radical reliance on Truth means that we acknowledge that there is only one Mind, and then we radically rely on that truth. Every time we walk into a patient's room and every time we make a decision about what we are going to do in that room, we are bringing forth our *own* unfoldment. And we are allowing other people to have theirs. We are keeping it nice and clear, and we have the added benefit of knowing we are operating under divine authority and divine decree.

The challenge of nursing is in keeping error at bay, and at the same time being compassionate and warm so that you don't

put aside the qualities of nursing. You need to do an actively good job of defending yourself. The thing that we all have to do, of course is to see that there is no personal patient, there's no personal nurse, there's no personal practitioner, no personal anything.

We're at home in our true selfhood. So Fern Lodge is moving forward, identifying itself through divine Mind, not using somebody else's experience and not feeling badly about this experience, but glorifying this experience right here and right now. And Fern Lodge is not using God's qualities to defend its past reputation, or its history, or even the thought which brought it into conception, but it is using the qualities of the here and now and going forward with an ever expanding awareness of the definition of divinity, which is being played out right here.

### Save June 11th for Fern Lodge

On Saturday, June 11th, Fern Lodge is sponsoring a meeting with

Mrs. Jean Tainsh, C.S.B. of Adelaide, Australia.

She will speak about Christian Science nursing in a talk entitled

#### **Rightful Nutriment**

The meeting will be held at First Church of Christ, Scientist in Oakland at 11:00 a.m. Put the date on your calendar, and plan to be with us.



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# Evelyn's Volunteer Update

When thinking about the joys of volunteer work at Fern Lodge, this statement from Mrs. Eddy's article "The New Birth" stood out to me:

"The new birth is not the work of a moment. It begins with moments and goes on with years; moments of surrender to God, of childlike trust and joyful adoption of good; moments of self-abnegation, self-consecration, heaven-born hope, and spiritual love" (*Misc. 15:13-17*).

Volunteers recognize the importance of preparing their thought to support an activity, and they find glorious opportunities to cherish the change of thought that gives evidence of a new birth.

If you are feeling Love's impulsion to join us in this holy work, the following opportunities are available now:

- Write letters for patients.
- Read from Christian Science periodicals.
- Be a metaphysical volunteer once a week.
- Join patients and nurses on one or more of our outings to East Bay Regional Parks, now scheduled for June 17, July 20 and August 12.
- Assist with weekly cooking or gardening classes.
- Mark patients' books for the weekly Lesson Sermon.
- Show a movie and serve popcorn one Saturday a month.

I am always happy to talk about any of these activities or to hear of your individual unfoldment regarding volunteer work. Please call me, Evelyn Spelman, at (415) 886-2448 or complete the form below and send it to me at Fern Lodge.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

\_\_\_\_\_ Park trips    \_\_\_\_\_ Marking books    \_\_\_\_\_ Cooking class on Friday afternoon  
\_\_\_\_\_ Reading    \_\_\_\_\_ Movies and popcorn    \_\_\_\_\_ Gardening class on Thursday morning  
\_\_\_\_\_ Metaphysical work on Mon., Tue., Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat., or Sun. (circle day)



## Wanted: A Few (More) Good Volunteers

As reported in our February *Focus*, Fern Lodge now has a Development Committee to find new ways to meet the needs of individual Christian Scientists for nursing care and financial assistance. This Committee, chaired by Betty Dempsey, has a core of seven members. They are looking to double their number.

The Development Committee is making and implementing plans to attain our two immediate goals:

(1) raise \$450,000 by June 30 of this year to complete and furnish our new wing and to supply the benevolence needed by our patients this fiscal year; and

(2) raise \$2 million over the next two years for our Benevolence Endowment Fund so that interest earned by the Fund can become a dependable source of income for our benevolence needs.

As a result of the Committee's efforts, Fern Lodge has received \$177,400 since our December newsletter stating our

fund-raising goals. All of us at Fern Lodge are grateful for this generous response to our needs, and we look forward to continued unfoldment in demonstrating ample supply.

What we also need right now, though, is more Development Committee members. Our Committee has come up with more ideas than its members have time to pursue. Could this be your opportunity to pitch in? The Committee has been meeting at Fern Lodge on Thursday mornings. The only qualifications needed for this volunteer work are faith in God's infinite supply for His creation, an appreciation of the healing activity of Christian Science nursing at Fern Lodge, and a willingness to share a little of your time and talent with us. If you want to explore the possibility of joining the Development Committee, Betty Dempsey is waiting for your call. Why not call her today at 276-1982?

## Share the Good News

At Fern Lodge we are quite often surprised when we learn that many Christian Scientists in our community don't have a clear concept of who we are and what we are doing.

You can help us communicate the good being done at Fern Lodge. You may know many people who are not familiar with our work. Take the opportunity to tell some of your friends about the value of Christian Science nursing and its practice here. Then ask if they would like to receive the *Focus*. You can then add them to our mailing list by jotting their names and addresses on a card and sending it in the donation return envelope. Many thanks for your help!



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