

# **Fern Lodge Focus — October 2008**

## **The Role of the *Church Manual* in Christian Science Nursing — 100 Years of Discipline**

Christian Science nursing is a timeless expression of Christ's love. It is one way Christians can fulfill Christ Jesus' command, "Love one another as I have loved you." All who seek to follow Jesus' example and demonstrate Christian Science healing must include simple kindness and care for human needs in their prayer and practice.

Love for God and man is fundamental to everyone's true nature and character. It is the spiritual expression of divine Love, which demonstrates God's design. Our Father-Mother sets His-Her children in their proper relationships, each one fulfilling his or her own unique role in support of the fullness of Creation, and in obedience to the Creator's instruction, "Be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it," Genesis 1:28. Whatever our specific role, we reflect divine Love as we fulfill our God-appointed role in our daily lives. Every day, as we are led to complete our tasks under the unerring guidance of Love, we are shown how to love.

A vital characteristic of love is tender and patient willingness to help others. Christian Science nursing is one expression of such help. The mission of Christian Science nursing is to heal through steadfast witnessing of the true nature of man as God's image and likeness. This healing mission includes daily willingness to provide comfort, protection, food and shelter for our fellow man in times of sickness or confusion.

If we obeyed only the urgings of divine Love, then every nursing need would be met by another's able reflection of Love, and Christian Science nursing would need no other discipline. But in our daily experience the selfless, assured, and affectionate expression of Love seems to lack completeness. The bylaw, "Christian Science Nurse,"

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which Mrs. Eddy included in the *Church Manual* 100 years ago, provides the standards and discipline that are necessary for our full and correct demonstration of the loving care of our Father-Mother God (*Manual* 49:7-16).

The *Manual* bylaw, when adhered to, ensures that Christian Science nursing cannot be understood as merely the human repetition of another's words about health, however correct the words may be. Nor can Christian Science nursing be just competent assistance to meet another's physical needs. The bylaw standards require Christian Science nurses to keep these two aspects of nursing, practical metaphysics and practical physical care, in their proper order. The bylaw requires all Christian Science nurses to understand and demonstrate the reflection of Love which heals—certainly and thoroughly. The bylaw also requires that Christian Science nurses be able to do whatever is necessary to care for individuals who need help to meet their physical and/or mental needs. And the bylaw demands that Christian Science nurses have the wisdom to know when and how their prayers must take form in the ministering attention known as nursing care.

Jesus made it clear that entrance into the Kingdom requires everyone to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and visit the sick. And he taught that, "The Kingdom of God is within you," Luke 17:21. Thanks to the discipline of the *Church Manual* bylaw, "Christian Science Nurse," we can accept with confidence our ability to care for others and let our reflection of divine Love pour from our hearts to comfort and heal those who are in need.

If you would like to learn more about the role of nursing in Christian Science, and its mission of healing and saving mankind from sin and sickness, disease and death, please contact us. We will be happy to share with you the insights and inspiration that are gained by those whose love for others is expressed in Christian Science nursing.



## **Christian Science Nursing Heals — Sharon Strong, Director of CS Nursing**

One hundred years ago, the discipline and standards for Christian Science nurses was made a permanent part of The Mother Church ministry when Mary Baker Eddy included in the *Church Manual* the bylaw, “Christian Science Nurse.” The *Manual* bylaw requires Christian Science nurses to build their practice on “the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death” (see *Manual* 19:1). Christian Science nurses do their most effective work when they keep the divine purpose of Christian Science in thought and adhere closely to the Scriptures.

Our purpose is to heal! Christian Science nurses daily witness the healing power of Christian Science. Their work is akin to Nehemiah’s —rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They guard the sickroom from

proved a turning point in the case. The patient suddenly opened her eyes, began eating, and a week later began walking again. Shortly after another patient arrived, she experienced a sudden sense of confusion and was unable to say the words she was thinking. This was very frightening and frustrating to her. A practitioner was called, and the next day there was absolutely no evidence of that condition. An out-of-town visitor fell and severely injured his upper arm and shoulder. He couldn’t move them without extreme pain. After several weeks of Christian Science treatment and practical assistance with daily needs, he went home, using both arms freely. This man is now working as a Christian Science nurse!

Our Christian Science Nursing Education Program is active! A well-established classroom curriculum,

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the “oppression and tyranny” of “mortal belief and knowledge obtained from the five corporeal senses” (*S&H* 589). They defend and uphold the building of New Jerusalem in thought, —the “spiritual facts and harmony of the universe; the kingdom of heaven, or reign of harmony” (*S&H* 592). Nehemiah directed his whole energies to his task, despite the suggestions of lack or fear, or the mesmerism and opposition personified by Sanballat and Tobiah. In the same way, Christian Science nurses are devoted to reaffirming the kingdom of heaven. They work with one hand and hold a weapon — “the sword of Science with which Truth decapitates error, materiality giving place to man’s higher individuality and destiny” (*S&H* 266) —in the other hand (Neh 4:17). The affirming of the spiritual facts of man’s true nature and being has resulted in home—healing and oneness with God—for patients. Here are a few healings from the past year:

A patient suddenly became very ill, lost all strength and interest in life. She seemed to be slipping away. We called her practitioner. Her nurse that day was alert to the aggressive mental suggestions hinting that death was inevitable, that this woman already had lived a long life, etc. The nurse’s steadfast cherishing of the perfect man of God’s creating while giving the appropriate care

with thorough on-job mentoring and supervision by experienced Christian Science nursing instructors, is available. This unique program offers flexible class schedules to meet individual student needs. Christian Scientists who live some distance from Fern Lodge have been able to receive substantial nursing instruction in their own home area. We offer bi-lingual instruction for Spanish speaking students. Our Christian Science Nursing 1 text has been translated into Spanish, and soon we will translate the advanced curriculum. Students in our nursing program need housing. If you know of a place convenient to Fern Lodge where a nurse could rent a room, please be in touch with us.

We provide in- and out-patient care; adult day care; consultation on needs; supplies to home cases; and home visits in the East Bay, including assistance to families with newborns. We often receive calls from Christian Scientists struggling with mental difficulties, such as claims of bi-polar, confusion, dementia and more. These individuals currently can receive only medical help, —taking medication and being placed in medical facilities. Our church should be able to address this aspect of care, and we’d love to hear your ideas about how to meet these needs. We long to care for all who would be helped by Christian Science nursing.



## *Loyalty to Our Leader — Edwin Leever, C.S. from Rocklin, CA*

Mary Baker Eddy valued her loyal students, and to help us understand what she valued she wrote, “By loyalty in students I mean this, — allegiance to God, subordination of the human to the divine, steadfast justice, and strict adherence to divine Truth and Love” (Ret 50:19). At our 2008 Annual Meeting, Edwin Leever, C.S., shared some ideas about these four points that are essential to loyalty. We are glad to share the following excerpts from his talk.

It starts with our allegiance to God. That’s Christian Science in a nutshell. In a talk Mrs. Eddy gave to students in 1889 she said this: “We, today, in this classroom are enough to convert the world if we are of one Mind; for then the whole world will feel the influence of this Mind” (Mis 279:27-29). Wow! Don’t limit the good that is going on in our movement, and subsequently in our world.

So let’s individually do our part. That’s why we have talks on Christian Science—to keep us all going spiritually. As we keep growing spiritually, we keep bringing healing into our lives and into the lives of others, because we’re becoming more loyal students, not only of Christian Science, but also of Christ Jesus, and we’re keeping Jesus’ healing mission going forward. Look what Jesus did in the three years he demonstrated and taught the power of the Christ, Truth. And he did it so beautifully; he didn’t limit it in any way.

In speaking to the members of Second Church, New York City, Mrs. Eddy said this: “May the benediction of ‘Well done, good and faithful,’ rest worthily on the builders of this beautiful temple, and the glory of the resurrection

morn burst upon the spiritual sense of this people with renewed vision, infinite meanings, endless hopes, and glad victories in the onward and upward chain of being” (My 202:13). Onward and upward, not backward and downward, that’s the way to go! Our job is to keep going spiritually each day in the right direction. The results: only good can take place, not only in our lives, but also in our whole Christian Science movement, and in our world. It requires of us all to study and ponder more and more deeply what our dear Leader has told us. And, as we all have experienced, sometimes holding each day to just one inspiring statement from her writings gets us going in the right, healing direction.

When I was relatively new in the practice someone I didn’t know called me for help. She told me her problem. And then I gave her some quotes of Mrs. Eddy to study. Before I could say another word she fired back at me, “Oh, I know all that.” My quiet reply, after listening for an angel message to relay to her, was simply, “Really, Then why are you calling me?” The result? Silence from the caller. And then she meekly replied, “OK, I’ll do it. I’ll read those passages.” We ended our conversation on a nice note. I prayed to simply correct any human thought about her that came to me, and to replace it with what Mrs. Eddy has told us as to what we all really are in our true, spiritual, God-like being. When she called me back later she told me she was carefully studying what I had recommended. And in no time at all, she later said, she got her healing, and she thanked me profusely.

Jesus said, “...with God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26). Now, do you believe that? After all, it is true! So when we start getting disturbed, or even a little bit discouraged, about anything, or any person, or our church, or any human situation we’re involved in, are we giving God full allegiance? We do this by knowing that whatever challenge is presenting itself to us can be healed quickly and completely and permanently, as we go onward and upward spiritually in our study of Christian Science.

You know what I do frequently when I’m reading the weekly Bible Lesson? I stop reading and ask myself, “Am I really accepting what I’m reading wholeheartedly today in the current Lesson Sermon, or am I simply sliding over the words?” And then I say this many a time: “Am I really starting to not just accept what I’m reading, but starting to live it better and better, step by step, moment by moment, in my whole thought and life?” And what do you know? That’s so often when healings take place in our lives. And why not? The

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basis of all healing in Christian Science is being more loyal to Mrs. Eddy's writings, and then expressing and living more of what she's telling us.

Many times over the years I say to mortal mind, when it seems to be hanging on in my life, "This suggestion of bodily difficulty is really nothing but a lie. So, mortal mind, beat it!" Sometimes I say "Buster, beat it!" Then I'm not accepting mortal mind's validity or authority for another moment. Healing, so often, immediately takes place, and if not immediately, I know healing is on its way, and it is.

Allegiance to God is what we're talking about. What are we bowing down to? Pain, discouragement, despair, or whatever? None of that is true for a moment. And to accept any of that is not being allegiant to God, not becoming more loyal to our Leader. So why accept any evil suggestions? Not one of them is true.

Mrs. Eddy tells us, "To reduce inflammation, dissolve a tumor, or cure organic disease, I have found divine Truth more potent than all lower remedies. And why not, since Mind, God, is the source and condition of all existence?" (*SC&H* 180:31-2). "And why not?" Don't you love those three words, "And why not?" Let us all keep spiritually going forward, onward, and upward. "And why not," regardless of what's before us? "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

We experience God's healings as we confidently and continually see ourselves and others as we all really are—God's beloved, spiritual creation. We do not have to give in to any materially minded false belief—physically, mentally, or whatever. Let us pull the rug out from every false belief. Then discouragement, despondency, fearfulness, and hopelessness, along with any discordant material condition, will vanish. "And why not?" as we simply become more allegiant to God and listen better to what He's telling us.

Just because we are having a challenge—even a so-called rough challenge—it does not mean that we're bad Christian Scientists! It's just time for us to grow spiritually some more. And the whole claim can vanish. "And why not?"

God never punishes, forsakes, nor neglects any of us for a single moment. His great love for us all is ever with us, no matter what we've done or haven't done. God is right here with us at all times, and we have to start listening more and more to what He is telling us, and start living more and more what He's saying to us, and not listening to what material sense is telling us. How grateful we can be that Mrs. Eddy has shared with us how to do all this. It begins with seeing ourselves as we truly are—God's perfect image and likeness. Holding on to that is expressing our allegiance to God and not bowing down to a single mortal mind suggestion. So why delay listening to what God is telling us? Delaying our spiritual thinking and listening doesn't do a thing for us. Just keep being allegiant to God, and good is the result!

Subordination of the human to the divine is the second point Mrs. Eddy brings out in her definition of being a loyal student. God doesn't waver, falter, or doubt His supremacy and power. He has all power. "There is no power apart from God. Omnipotence has all-power, and to acknowledge any other power is to dishonor God," (*SC&H* 228:25-27).

There is no power but God, and He is all good. So who wants to dishonor Him? To keep subordinating the human picture to the divine is honoring God, and by so doing we are understanding God better and better each day. Why did Mrs. Eddy assign to us the Weekly Bible Lesson to be read each day? It tells us to cut through and stay out of materially minded thinking. Let's ask ourselves, "What do we spend more time on each day, God, or a problem we're facing?" We don't ignore the problem, nor do we have to get obsessed with it. Rather, we align our thought more consistently with God and see what He's telling us about all of this. Let's listen more continually to what He is telling us about



the falsity of every material condition we're dealing with.

The third point Mrs. Eddy named as essential for loyalty in students is steadfast justice. Think about those two words, steadfast justice. So many times in our lives we've all run into injustice. But we don't have to put up with it, because justice, and not injustice, reigns supreme. God, the only source of our being, is eternal good and the only power there is. And He simply doesn't put up with injustice. Remember this verse from Job, "... (God) is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict," (Job 37:23). So where does injustice come from since God is the only power? Mortal mind suggestions are always trying to get us in big trouble. Mrs. Eddy tells us specifically what brings injustice. She says, "When pride, self, and human reason reign, injustice is rampant," (*My* 283:19). How about that, just three reasons—pride, self, and human reasoning.

So let's handle injustice. Handling something in Christian Science is seeing its nothingness. Where do pride and self and human reason come from? Mortal mind suggestions. Nothing else! Think about each of those four words. Pride is simply letting our human thoughts dominate our thinking.

But really, what are we receptive to? It's Truth or

error—take your choice. And self, what is that? A mortal arrogant self that gets all caught up in what he or she wants. Yet to see ourselves as spiritual ideas of God, how could we be so personally wrapped up in ego? That's all a mortal self is—egotistical reasoning. I like what Mrs. Eddy says about the definition of "I, or Ego." She says, "All the objects of God's creation reflect one Mind, and whatever reflects not this one Mind, is false and erroneous, even the belief that life, substance, and intelligence are both mental and material," (*S&H* 588:15).

"Whatever reflects not this one Mind is false and erroneous." I like that! So when we come up with any personal opinion, are we checking it first with God, divine Mind? Or, are we egotistically saying "This is

it"? If it doesn't come from Mind, divine Mind, or God, what we have to do is to throw it out. Quickly!

When we find ourselves getting so upset and disturbed over something — like injustice of some sort — let's make sure we're listening for the right understanding of God, as divine Mind, the only Mind. We're all simply Mind's expression, which is not out to harm or to hurt anyone. Sticking with God, eternal Truth, we discover we're not lost nor trapped in any way. We're just being driven nearer to God. Not one of us can ever be hurt or harmed, and as we take the time and effort to spiritually strengthen and enlighten our courage and faith, we are led to steadfast justice. In reality, is there really any other kind? Of course not. Justice is simply a basic part of God's creation—what we really are. "Every trial of our faith in God makes us stronger. The more difficult seems the material condition to be overcome by Spirit, the stronger should be our faith and the purer our love" (*S&H* 410:14-17).

As we strengthen spiritually our courage and faith, and purify our love, we wake up to what's really true, and steadfast justice pops into our thought and into our lives. We simply must watch what our thought rests upon—Truth or error, Spirit or matter, divine Mind or

mortal mind. And how grateful we can be that injustice, in any form, is no part of God's plan for any

of us. So why do we accept it, or get alarmed by it? It's nothing but lies. So why accept it in any way? Jesus didn't. Mrs. Eddy didn't. Are we with them in our thought? What are we believing is true?

The fourth point of being loyal to our Leader is strict adherence to divine Truth and Love. Church is "the structure of Truth and Love" (*S&H* 583:12-13). Let's make sure our concept of church is constantly adhering to divine Truth and Love. Mrs. Eddy writes, "The church is the mouthpiece of Christian Science," and "The continuity of The First Church of Christ, Scientist...is assured...It will embrace all the churches, one by one, because in it alone is the simplicity of the oneness of God; the oneness of Christ and the perfecting of man stated scientifically" (*My* 247:5-6;

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## Loyalty to Our Leader, conclusion

342:19-20, 21).

Are we really accepting that consistently? Are we prayerfully, in thinking about Church, staying with the “oneness of God; the oneness of Christ and the perfecting of man stated scientifically”? Because, after all, God is in complete charge and control of “the structure of Truth and Love.” Mrs. Eddy goes on to say that church is “whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle.” Is that how we view our church? Every day? As the very “structure of Truth and Love” and “whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle”? If we do, that’s strict adherence to divine Truth and Love, and that is being loyal to our Leader.

I love this sentence from *Science and Health*: “It is our ignorance of God, the divine Principle, which produces apparent discord, and the right understanding of Him restores harmony” (*S&H* 390:7-9). It’s “our ignorance of God,” not somebody else’s, “which produces apparent discord.” Know, then, that God will see us through any discordant church situation in a loving and harmonious way. How? Through “the right understanding of Him,” that “restores harmony.” And that, remember, leads not to disaster, discouragement, depression, or even to closed doors. It leads us into healing, harmony, triumph and victory in our entire church experience.

All these things we’ve been talking about are simply helping us to be more loyal to our Leader. The results? Healing in our lives, and progress in our whole movement, as well. Remember the four points of being loyal to our Leader: “Allegiance to God, subordination of the human to the divine, steadfast justice, and strict adherence to divine Truth and Love.” So go for it, stay with them, and see wonderful things happen.

Complete list of references for Mr. Leever’s talk

1. Introduction  
Ret 50:19
2. Allegiance to God  
Man 17:8  
S&H 201:11 the  
Mis 279:27-29 (to ;)  
Going onward and upward  
My:202:13  
S&H 559:20-21 (to 2nd .)  
Matt 19:26 with God  
S&H 180:31-2  
Luke 1:37  
S&H 180:25-27
3. Subordination of the human to the divine  
Be more alert  
S&H 228:25-27  
2 Tim 1:7  
1 John 4:18 perfect (to :)  
CSS Vol. 85, No. 10, 3/7/83 p. 417
4. Steadfast Justice  
Ret 50:19  
God only sends justice  
Job 37:23 he is  
My 283:19  
S&H 588:15  
S&H 390:7-9  
We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, p.159  
S&H 410:14-17
5. Strict adherence to divine Truth and Love
  - A. Church  
S&H 583:12-13  
My 247:5-6  
My 342:19-20, 21  
CSJ Vol. 99, 11:81, p. 649  
S&H 136:1-6  
S&H 35:19 (2nd our) - 25
  - B. Our Church based entirely on Jesus’ word and works  
Man 17:8
  - C. What can we do?  
S&H 390:7-9  
Ret 50:19



## *The Healing Effects of Patient Activities — Robin Barben, Activities Director*

A group of patients here at Fern Lodge reached out to a Christian Scientist who is in prison. The patients discovered a renewed sense of usefulness as every Monday for nine years we wrote letters to him. We sought to see more clearly the spiritual man, who is innocent, in spite of the fact that it appeared that a severe crime had been committed. As our correspondence continued, we came to cherish and love this individual. We gained a thorough conviction that in his true, spiritual identity, he was not the same man who committed the crime, no matter what mortal mind, through personal sense, claimed. The following is compiled from letters we received from this individual. In future issues of the **Fern Lodge Focus** we hope to share more of his inspiration and devotion to Christian Science.

“Dear Friends at Fern Lodge,

“I would like to express my appreciation for the wonderful opportunity for growth Fern Lodge has given me, and the healing that has resulted. Sharing ideas with the patients and staff about Christian Science became an open forum for grace and Love to be expressed and experienced. This exchange of ideas became a passageway for my true character to be recognized and expressed; in this process, God awakened me to my true self for the first time.

“Giving and receiving expressions of divine Love has broken down many walls, which had prevented me from fully opening to God and accepting His love. I especially cherish how, through my correspondence with the dear ones at

*Love began to unfold a way to live a life in Christ, helping me to express the qualities of divine Love; and I began to feel included in the family of God.*

Fern Lodge, I began to feel truly accepted, not as a mortal being, but as a perfect child of God. This was especially important to me because the pervading belief is that as an incarcerated person, prison is a place where one doesn't deserve love. I began to feel seen as a true spiritual reflection of Love rather than a sinful human being without redemption. Love began to unfold a way to live a life in Christ, helping me to express the qualities of divine Love; and I began to feel included in the family of God.

“As I open to accepting that I truly belong to God's fold, I am able to give to others the same sense of belonging through my expression of Love. I remember one day I was with a group of guys getting ready to play basketball and one guy was standing by himself watching us. I felt compelled to go over and ask him if he wanted to play. He said sure and I picked him to be on our team. As we played I noticed how happy he was to be a part of the team, and later that day, after the games were over, he came up to me and said it was the best time he'd had in many years and thanked me for including him. I thanked God.

“One day I was walking, and praying with a feeling of surrendering completely to the direction of God. I had a choice of going two different ways and an angel message told which way I was to go. When I did I was directed right towards a guy, who when I arrived, I found was having a severe physical problem in his chest. I got an officer and he opened the door. The man and the officer were both upset, but I held to the true man—one with God and always perfect. My eyes connected with the guy who seemed challenged and I felt he could feel the Truth I knew about him. They took him away to get help, but he was back that same day and when I saw him he told me, ‘You saved my life.’ I told him to thank God.

“My profound appreciation for the qualities of Christ I have opened to through the communication I've had with Fern Lodge stems from the spiritual growth I've experienced, the presence of God I have felt, and the confidence in being alive to Life that I have gained. Thanks to Fern Lodge, I feel a purpose because I feel part of something bigger.

“Thank you for reaching out, touching my life, and helping me feel that God includes everyone in His love.”



## ***Fern Lodge's Benevolent Focus and Current Financial Needs***

What a joy it is for us to witness the power of divine Love year after year. Prominently displayed on the wall of many Christian Science branch churches is Mary Baker Eddy's familiar statement, "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need." This fact is demonstrated every day, week, month and year that Fern Lodge provides Christian Science nursing care to Christian Scientists.

Fern Lodge ended 2007 debt free and with adequate funds to continue offering Christian Science Nursing Services. Our 2007 operating expenses were \$1,650,000. Our income was \$800,000. Fern Lodge gave \$850,000 in benevolence to patients needing financial assistance. This benevolence was possible because of the support from Christian Scientists, Christian Science Associations and Christian Science churches. The benevolence comes in gifts from a few dollars to very large amounts. The patients, the staff and the Board of Fern Lodge are grateful for every donation. Our love and appreciation go out to every one of you.

This year we wish to express gratitude for a recent trend. With additional staff and some changes in procedure in our business office there is a new sense of expectancy that each dear patient will be able to pay for their care when the time comes. This attitude has borne fruit, and more patients now are able to pay for their care. This is a wonderful demonstration of God's care for Fern Lodge. But we still accept many individuals who need substantial benevolence. Over the years up to 90% of our patients were unable to pay a significant portion of the cost of their care. At this time just 65% need financial assistance. Benevolence now comes to about \$30,000 every month. Thank you for all you do to help us give the financial assistance needed by many deserving Christian Scientists.

We have another current and ongoing need. In addition to the strong support you give for our benevolence policy, we ask for your assistance with another major project. The article in this ***Focus*** by our Director of Christian Science Nursing tells of our need for housing for students in the Fern Lodge Nursing Education program. We plan to rent units in nearby apartments in Castro Valley for the students, and we will need to help the students during their first years in our program. It will cost about \$4,000 each month to subsidize housing for six students.

***Fern Lodge Focus — October 2008***

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